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TORONTO • TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2009 metronews.ca

Health pg 24

The nose knows love

DAVE CHIDLEY/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Wiarton Willie

Keep those mitts and boots handy

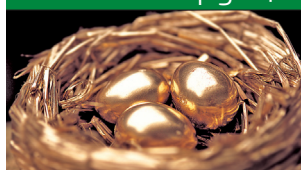
LORE Several of the most revered weather prognosticating groundhogs were roused from hibernation yesterday to deliver the news that six more weeks of winter are in store, which an expert of the human variety says actually sounds pretty good.

According to groundhog lore, if the animal emerges on Feb. 2 and sees its shadow, winter will last another six weeks, and if not, an early spring is in the cards. North America's most celebrated furry forecasters, including Wiarton Willie, Shubenacadie Sam, Balzac Billy and Punxsutawney Phil, all cast shadows.

Bad news perhaps, but an Environment Canada forecaster is quick to point out this is Canada, and if winter lasted just six more weeks to mid-March, that would, in fact, be an early spring.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

RRSP Guide pg 14



Build that nest egg

ShareYourViews
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T.O. may strike gold

Successful Pan Am Games bid would be economic boon to city

Toronto will likely come out the big winner if the city secures the 2015 Pan Am Games, with waterfront lands poised to house the athletes' village that could be turned into affordable housing afterward.

Even though the $1.4-billion bid — slashed by $300 million because of the economic climate — is being touted as a Greater Golden Horseshoe plan, many events would be in Toronto, including premier sports like swimming and diving, as well as triathlon and cycling.

Bid chair David Peterson, who came to city hall yesterday to update councillors, said organizers are considering housing athletes and coaches in the West Donlands area of the waterfront, where affordable housing and market-rate housing are planned.

Decision

- The 42-member Pan American Sports Organization makes its final decision in November.

Toronto Community Housing has plans for 130 units of affordable housing near King Street East and St. Lawrence Street, with construction slated to start later this year.

"Obviously, if you can build with two purposes, it serves two agendas; it would be complementary," said CEO Derek Ballantyne. "If it brings resources for the construction of more affordable housing, that's also beneficial."

Opening and closing ceremonies would likely be at the Rogers Centre. The Air Canada Centre, BMO Field and Ricoh Coliseum are all expected to be used along with facilities at three universities in Toronto and upgraded city parks like Birchmount and Centennial.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Humber students are out of this world

"T-minus 10, 9, 8, 7, T-minus 6, 4, 3, 2, 1. We're live."

That was the signal for Gino Cunti, one of four Humber College students who built a NASA-approved telecommunications system, to try to make contact with the International Space Station from a lab room at the school's Rexdale campus.

"NA1SS, this is VA3JUV Humber College checking in for scheduled contact, do you copy?"

Nothing but static.

With a year and a half of work on the line and the country watching, Cunti tried again.

"NA1SS, this is VA3JUV checking in from Humber College scheduled contact, do you copy?"

Then, from 400 kilometres above the Earth's surface, from a station hurtling at 27,000 kilometres per hour, they got their response.

"Hello? I have you a little bit weak, can you try again?"

A burst of cheers rose through the room, the signal cleared and everybody got down to work.

CHRIS SO/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Humber students Paul Je, left, Gino Cunti, centre, and Kevin Luong prepare to make contact with the International Space Station yesterday. They said this is the first time college-level students have been able to contact the station with self-built equipment.

Yesterday, Cunti, Paul Je, Patrick Neelin and Kevin Luong became the first college-level students to build and successfully operate the apparatus required to make contact with an astronaut in outer space.

Their professor, Mark Rector, called his students' success the highlight of his career.

"That is not something you do with a toy you buy from Radio Shack or a walkie-talkie you pick up at Wal-Mart ... this is something they built with their hands."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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Shots fired outside Mississauga mall

A 22-year-old man who walked into a hospital with gunshot wounds was the victim of yesterday's shooting outside a Mississauga mall. Police were called to Westwood Mall on Goreway Drive, near Derry Road, at 10:40 a.m. after reports of gunshots. At least one bullet hit the mall entrance after a dispute broke out between four men outside. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Local

"I said we should send a crested silver Massey tea spoon into space, since so many are missing."

David Landaverde, right, breakfast cook at U of T's Massey College

Spoon in space

It started as a joke. The joke became a serious contender and yesterday the spoon won a college-wide competition to go in outer space with astronaut Julie Payette, one of the best-known alumni of Massey college. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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Tomorrow's Metro

Entertainment

Metro introduces you to the latest contestant who failed to make the cut on Project Runway Canada.

metronews.ca

What's online today.

Your Money Allan Small on worries and opportunities in the banking sector at **metronews.ca/investing**

Video Students defy odds by making contact with space station for school project at **metronews.ca/canada**

Blogs Hollywood Rants about great books made into awful films at **metronews.ca**

Lotteries

Ontario Pick 3: 8 6 6; **Ontario Pick 40:** 8 2 9 3
Encore: 252589
Daily Keno: 3, 7, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 25, 27, 28, 29, 33, 53, 56, 60, 63, 64, 67, 69, 70
These results are not official.

ShareYourViews

torontoletters@metronews.ca

York students back in class

How do you welcome back students after a bitter three-month strike?

If you're York University Prof. Dennis Raphael, you let your third-year class vote on a new marking scheme for the rest of its shorter semester.

In one of the dozens of York lecture halls yesterday that erupted with learning for the first time in 12 weeks, Raphael decided to give students a small say in an academic year for which many felt they had lost control.

"I did it to help smooth the transition back to class," said Raphael after the first lecture he has held since Nov. 6, when York's teaching assistants, contract faculty and graduate assistants walked off the job for better benefits and job security.

All 50,000 students were back on campus yesterday after the Ontario government ordered the Canadian Union of Public Employees 3903 back to work last week and sent the dispute to an arbitrator.

Amid the crush of returning undergrads, the York Federation of Students gathered names on a petition for a 12 per cent tuition refund — the school year has been clipped by 12 per cent — and slammed York president Mamdouh Shoukri for continuing to draw his six-figure salary while students went without their education.

But some just wanted everyone to get along. Kinesiology student Mona Nasiri, part of a school spirit group, held up a sign offering "Free Hugs" in the main rotunda.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

RENE JOHNSTON/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

A sign calls for a 12 per cent return of tuition fees to York University students after the long strike kept students from study since November. Thousands of students returned to the university after the strike was ended by provincial intervention.

Civil liberties debate boiling on campus

Free speech versus a woman's right to choose: The issue is coming to a head — again — on university campuses across Canada.

The Canadian Civil Liberties Association is campaigning to overturn decisions by several student unions to withdraw funding and resources from pro-life organizations.

The civil liberties group, though "strongly pro-choice" on abortion, says the students' move violates an even more important democratic right — freedom of expression.

The rights fight started last June when the York Federation of Students adopted a motion denying certain pro-life groups access to student resources, such as meeting facilities.

But the civil liberties group said just because its view is disturbing isn't sufficient reason to shut it out.

"These may be valid reasons to challenge anti-abortion organizations, but not to muzzle them," the civil liberties group writes in its letter. Instead of trying to starve these organizations of access to meeting facilities and campus newsletters, students should challenge their views in public debates, it says.

By going public, the civil liberties group says it hopes students will lobby their leaders to overturn their decision.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Following suit

- The York student union succeeded in persuading the Canadian Federation of Students to endorse its actions.
- Student unions at Carleton, Lakehead and Guelph have adopted similar policies.

Teachers get new talks deadline

CONTRACT Toronto's public board and the union representing its 6,500 high school teachers now have until midnight Thursday to hammer out a deal.

The two sides resumed negotiations yesterday under a media blackout and plan to meet again this morning.

Toronto is the only public board in Ontario not to have an agreement with its local Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation.

"We're still talking and I remain very hopeful that we will get an agreement that's very good for our teachers," said John Campbell, chair of the Toronto District School Board.

Last Friday at midnight was the original deadline — after which a 12 per cent raise from the province was supposed to have been pulled — but both sides agreed to the extension. Technically, both the board and union have until Thursday to ratify a new agreement, but it's unclear how firm the new deadline is. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Agent 'feels bad' for role in recruiting

HEARING An RCMP agent who infiltrated an alleged homegrown terror cell testified yesterday he "felt bad" about playing a key role in helping recruit youths. The testimony came as Mubin Shaikh recounted his role as a trainer at a so-called terrorist training camp where leaders assessed the physical prowess and commitment to jihad. The youths were among 18 people charged in 2006 for allegedly belonging to a cell plotting to detonate truck bombs.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

News in brief

SUBWAY SHOOTING A suspect held by police for a shooting at Osgoode subway station remains in custody after a court appearance yesterday. Curt John, 21, surrendered Sunday. He faces 12 charges, some related to the Jan. 22 shooting that sent a 19-year-old to hospital, others connected to previous incidents — including one count of accessory after the fact in the 2008 shooting death of Dominic Shearer-Hanomansingh. John will plead not guilty to all charges. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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Three men charged in McDonald's heist
Three men have been charged with the Jan. 31 robbery of a McDonald's restaurant in Brampton after it closed at 1 a.m. **TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE**

Arson suspect held

As fire crews battled a blaze that threatened to engulf a west-end home early yesterday, police arrested a man who stood watching the flames — then charged him with setting the fire.

Now that man is the subject of a broader investigation bent on determining whether or not he is the west-end arsonist.

"We're trying to keep everything quiet," Det. Judy Nosworthy said. "The investigation is ongoing and we don't want to jeopardize any future evidence that may come to light."

In the last year and a half, a firebug has lit a string of at least 22 worsening blazes in the area. The spree climaxed last week with a fire that caused $200,000 in damage and forced a family to flee from a home just minutes before it was gutted by flames.

The identity of the current suspect has not been released, so as not to bias witness statements and stymie the probe, police said yesterday.

PAWEL DWULIT/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE
There was a suspected case of arson at 201 St. Marks Rd., leaving a garage and car burnt as well as a shed in a backyard.

Aside from revealing he was intoxicated at the time of his arrest yesterday, detectives are saying little about the man taken into custody after fire destroyed a garage, car and shed on both sides of a semi-detached home on St. Mark's Road, a quiet residential street just north of Bloor West Village.

Ellen Hartmann lives in the semi-detached home where the fire was set yesterday. Hartmann said police told her brother the man had already been a suspect, one of at least four, in the string of neighbourhood arsons under investigation.

After consultations with a Crown attorney yesterday, investigators amended the charges against the suspect several times, finally settling on one count of arson and two counts of prowl by night.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Impaired driver found guilty

CRASH A Georgetown woman who blamed her victim for a deadly crash has been convicted of impaired driving causing death.

Christina Eichstedt, 26, will be sentenced April 23 in a Brampton courtroom. At the trial, she blamed Valerie Landriault, 24, for the June 7, 2007, fatality. She insisted Landriault suddenly stopped her car in a Brampton intersection and she couldn't avoid crashing into her.

But Justice Irving Andre yesterday ruled Landriault was "blameless."

Had the accused not sped through an intersection at Williams Parkway Boulevard under the influence of alcohol, he said the crash would not have occurred because she would have been able to stop in time. "This was an avoidable accident," Andre said.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

News in brief

FATALITY A 91-year-old man has died after being hit by a delivery truck near Weston Road and Finch Avenue West at about 4 p.m. yesterday.

DIED A 73-year-old man struck by a car as he walked along a Mississauga street has died. Wilson Leung was hit as he and his wife walked on Treadwells Drive Jan. 26. The pair were on the street because the sidewalk was plugged with snow.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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UN to examine Canada's human rights record
Canada's human rights record will be examined this week by the United Nations. The UN Human Rights Council will be hearing from Canadian officials who have travelled to Geneva to engage in "an interactive dialogue" with the UN body on Ottawa's view of the situation. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Canada

Seeing red for years

The Harper government's budget will not only create the first massive deficit in a dozen years, but may set the stage for Ottawa to spill red ink for a decade or more, a new analysis suggests. Private-sector consulting firm IHS-Global Insight says there is only a 15 per cent chance Finance Minister Jim Flaherty, left, will be able to balance the federal books in 2013-2014, as the budget projects. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Plan 'fraught with peril'

Some regulations may be cut

A secret plan by Premier Dalton McGuinty's Liberal government to cut regulations by 25 to 35 per cent is raising concerns Ontario could face another food safety or financial crisis without adequate safeguards.

The program has quietly grown to involve every government ministry, a document obtained by the Toronto Star shows.

Called Open for Business: Reduce the Burden, a 45-page internal government paper says the effort seeks "to create a modern and competitive system that delivers results for Ontario businesses."

It goes on to state that "reducing the burden does not mean reducing the safeguards that protect the Ontario public," instead taking aim at obsolete or duplicative regulations that cost businesses time and money.

But the Ontario Federation of Labour warns the exercise is fraught with peril in the post-Walkerton water crisis era and given the lack of regulations blamed for the global economic meltdown that began on Wall Street last year. And, recently, lack of sprinkler systems in seniors' homes has led to fire deaths.

"If there are regulations that make no sense and are preventing us from creating jobs that's fine, but to arbitrarily say we've got to get rid of at least a quarter of the regulations, it puts people's lives at risk," said federation president Wayne Samuelson.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Envirospeak

- Part of the program, being led by Economic Development Minister Michael Bryant, involves scrapping two regulations for every new one — which the government is dubbing a "cap-and-trade" system to give the effort a green glow that Samuelson criticized as inappropriate "envirospeak" while at the same time "they conceptualize regulation as pollution."

Ceremony **Honour for Charest**

PHILIPPE WOJAZER/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

France President Nicolas Sarkozy, right, applauds yesterday after awarding Quebec Premier Jean Charest with the Legion of Honor during a ceremony at the Elysee Palace in Paris.

Massacre film draws criticism

The massacre of 14 women by 25-year-old Marc Lépine at the École Polytechnique on Dec. 6, 1989, has turned a population upside down and forever linked Lépine's hatred with the pain of the victims' families and the debate about the status of women in Quebec, and the rest of Canada.

The unease with which Quebecers have approached the event ever since then continues to this day, nearly 20 years later, as a new film, Polytechnique, gets set to open in theatres in Montreal Friday.

Predictably, there has been controversy about its release. On Internet forums and in newspapers, some wonder why the filmmakers would dredge up such a painful piece of history. Some have complained the movie's trailers have sensationalized the events.

But those who have seen the $6-million film's previews say it's highly emotive, not exploitive.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Forecasts peg $5B deficit for Ontario

ECONOMY Ontario will bleed red ink for several years as it limps through a recession and fights to recover from a "significant" deficit in the upcoming budget, Premier Dalton McGuinty warned yesterday.

Some predict Ontario's deficit will reach at least $5 billion this year, taking into account a $500-million shortfall the government forecast in the fall, as well as the billions of dollars that have since been promised for infrastructure and troubled automakers.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

News in brief

VISIT U.S. President Barack Obama's much-anticipated trip to Canada Feb. 19 is drawing controversy because he will not be speaking to Parliament during his brief stopover. Opposition MPs and even Democrats Abroad say Obama's visit should be celebrated by all Canadians and not limited to a cloistered one-on-one with Prime Minister Stephen Harper.

SETTLEMENT Maple Leaf Foods Inc. has agreed to pay up to $125,000 to individuals with serious and long-lasting physical injuries resulting from last year's listeriosis outbreak.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

U.S. judge in Lehman Bros. case charged with slapping wife

Judge James Peck, 63, who is overseeing the bankruptcy of Wall Street investment bank Lehman Bros., was arrested Saturday at his home on Manhattan's Park Avenue on charges of slapping his wife, Judith Peck, on the face with an open palm. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

World

British capital snowed in

London ground to a halt yesterday after the worst snowstorm in 18 years caused hundreds of flight cancellations and virtually halted public transportation. Shops, schools and courts shut down and long trails of commuters trudged through the streets of the British capital looking for ways to get to work after more than 10 centimetres of snow fell overnight. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Canadian teens smoke most pot

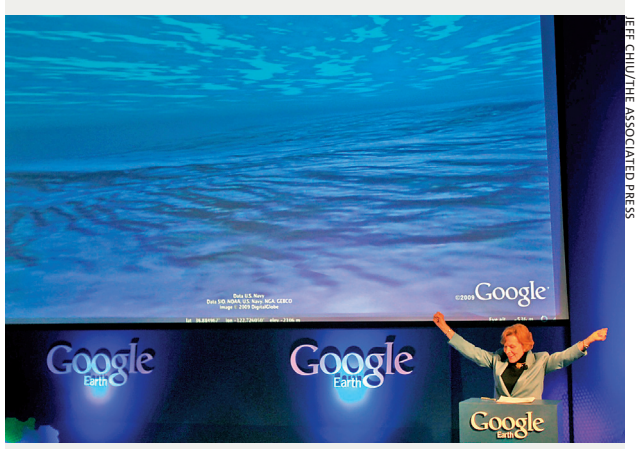
STUDY Kids are smoking less pot and going out less often with friends at night, a study in the Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine of 15-year-olds in 30 countries found. The double declines occurred in the U.S., Canada and European countries from 2002 to 2006. Marijuana use increased only in Estonia, Lithuania and Malta, and among Russian girls.

While rates varied widely among countries, prevalence was highest in Canada, where 30 per cent of boys and almost 28 per cent of girls used marijuana in 2006.

The U.S. ranked third in 2006, with 24 per cent of boys and girls each reporting marijuana use.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Earth **As Google sees it**



JEFF CHIU/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sylvia Earle, explorer in residence of the National Geographic Society and founder of the Deep Search Foundation, cheers at the image shown on the new Google Earth 5.0 in San Francisco yesterday. Google Inc. is launching a new version of Google Earth that will let users explore the oceans, view images of Mars and watch the Earth's surface change over time.

News in brief

AFRICA Moammar Gadhafi was elected yesterday as head of the African Union, a position long sought by the Libyan leader pushing his oil-rich country into the international mainstream after years of isolation. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Gaza truce strained

Israeli air strike kills militant in border town

More strains have been reported in the informal and fragile ceasefire between Israel and Hamas.

A Palestinian militant was killed yesterday when a missile fired from an Israeli warplane hit his car in the southern Gaza Strip.

The strike came as Hamas sent a delegation to Egypt in hopes of wrapping up a long-term ceasefire following Israel's devastating three-week offensive in Gaza.

Israel said the air strike targeted a group of militants who had fired mortar shells at Israel.

Palestinian medical officials said a militant in the vehicle was killed, while a second occupant and two bystanders were wounded.

The air strike took place in Rafah, a town located along Gaza's southern border with Egypt. With Gaza's borders sealed by Israel and Egypt, Rafah has a bustling smuggling trade and Israel frequently targets the area to prevent the flow of weapons into Gaza. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Offers pour in for octuplets' mother

SURVIVORS The octuplets born to a Southern California woman have become the longest-surviving bunch in U.S. history.

The six boys and two girls turned a week old yesterday at Kaiser Permanente Bellflower Medical Center.

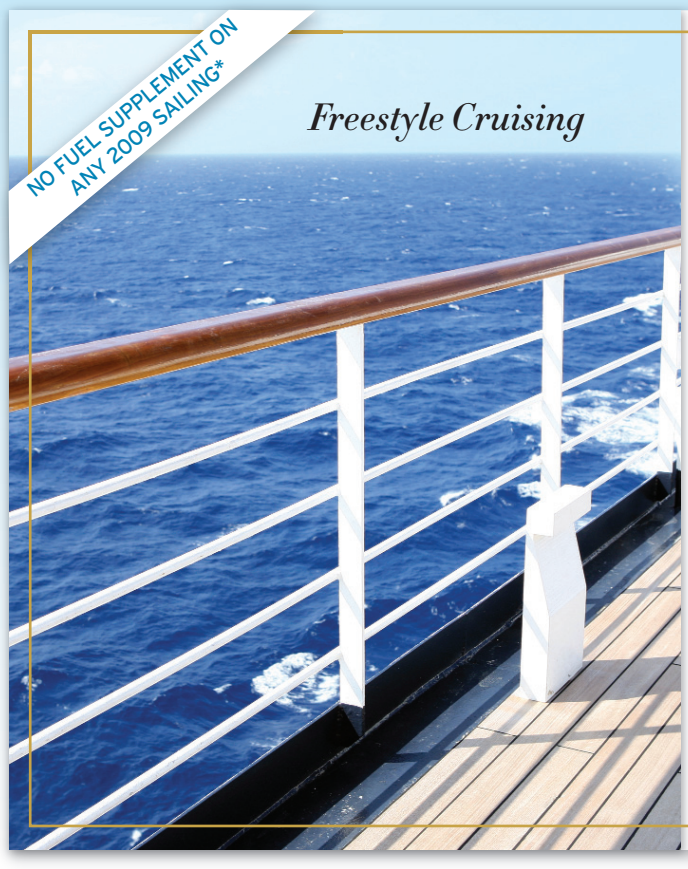
Their mother, Nadya Suleman, has been inundated with hundreds of offers a day for book deals, TV shows and other proposals, her publicist said.

"She's the most sought after mom in the world right now," Joann Killeen said. "Everyone wants to talk to her. Everyone wants to meet her. People are offering her book deals, TV series, just about anything you can imagine."

Suleman, who remained hospitalized with her children, hasn't decided what she'll do next, Killeen said.

Suleman, a single mother, already had six children, ages 2 to 7, when she gave birth to her octuplets on Jan. 26. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

AIR CANADA VACATIONS



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$1739 Taxes & fees: $330

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Norwegian Jewel
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July 9 • 12 nts.
$2329 Taxes & fees: $630

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Norwegian Pearl
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Apr. 19 • 19 nts.
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tico.ca

British workers go on strike over hiring of foreign labour
Hundreds more British nuclear and coal-fired power plant workers joined thousands of others on strike yesterday in a widening labour campaign over the use of Italian and Portuguese workers to build an oil refinery in the northeastern town of Immingham. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

UN peacekeepers staying in Sudan

REBELS A joint UN-African Union peacekeeping force will not leave a town in southern Darfur as Sudan has requested so that it can oust rebels who have seized the town, UN secretary general Ban Ki-moon said yesterday.

The peacekeepers are in Muhajeria to protect civilians displaced by the conflict in the Darfur region. The Justice and Equality Movement rebel group captured the town last month. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

China says deaths at work declining

ACCIDENTS China's work-related deaths fell below 100,000 last year for the first time in more than a decade, amid an increased government focus on accident prevention, state media reported yesterday.

The number of deaths dropped to 91,172 for 2008, a 10.2 per cent decline from the previous year. Latest figures show that 11.4 workers die for every 100,000 on the job. In the U.S., there were 3.7 deaths for every 100,000 workers. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Republican governor aids Obama

U.S. President Barack Obama said yesterday that "very modest differences" over a massive package to revive the economy should not delay its swift passage, a fresh appeal to Congress as the country dealt with another dose of dire financial news.

Obama teamed up with Vermont Gov. Jim Douglas, the Republican vice-chairman of the National Governors Association, as he sought bipartisan backing for the stimulus legislation. An $819-billion US version passed the House last week without a single Republican vote. The Senate took up its $900-billion version yesterday.

Republican legislators argue the plan is too expensive and doesn't include enough tax cuts.

"If I were writing it, it might look a little different," said Douglas, who sat at Obama's side in the Oval Office. "But the essence of a recovery package is essential to get the nation's economy moving."

> **"The essence of a recovery package is essential to get the nation's economy moving."**
> Jim Douglas

Douglas is among several Republican governors who are breaking with their colleagues in Congress to ask for approval of the plan.

U.S. reports say personal spending fell for the sixth straight month in December by one per cent. Incomes also dipped, and the personal savings rate shot higher, a sign that consumers remain extremely nervous about the economy. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Rock icon **Day the music died**

LUBBOCK AVALANCHE-JOURNAL/JOHN A. BOWERSMITH/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Rock 'n' roll star Buddy Holly's headstone, with his original name, rests among those of family members at the City of Lubbock Cemetery in Lubbock, Texas. Today marks the 50th anniversary of the plane crash that took the life of the 22-year-old, 28-year-old J.P. (The Big Bopper) Richardson and 17-year-old Ritchie Valens. The change in spelling on his tombstone was due to an error in a contract he signed, listing him as Buddy Holly, the name then adopted for his professional career.

News in brief

SANCTIONS The United States is imposing sanctions on several Chinese, Iranian and North Korean companies for violating arms export regulations governing missile technology and other proliferation activities. The penalties — the first from the new administration — are largely symbolic as they bar four firms in China, three in North Korea and two in Iran from trade with the U.S. that they were not likely involved in. But they signal a continuing tough stance from Washington on weapons technology transfers. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Daschle says sorry for tax error

NOMINATION Trying to salvage his nomination, Tom Daschle apologized yesterday for delinquent tax payments as U.S. President Barack Obama and a top Senate chairman stood by him as the choice to lead the Health and Human Services Department.

Following a weekend of revelations about taxes and potential ethical conflicts, Daschle expressed remorse to the Senate Finance Committee, the panel that will decide his fate.

Taxes

- Daschle recently filed amended tax returns for 2005-07 to report $128,203 US in back taxes and $11,964 in interest.

Sen. Max Baucus (D-Mont.), chairman of the Senate panel, said he backed Daschle's confirmation. The expression of support came hours before Daschle was scheduled to meet with the committee and despite a less than amicable relationship between the two men. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Comment & Views

Comment

The tides have turned

Harper's liberal budget draws backlash from Conservatives

NationalReport

Lawrence Martin

For the first time as prime minister, Stephen Harper is facing public criticism from within his own flock. His sometimes-strategist Tom Flanagan told interviewer Steve Paikin last week that Mr. Harper has dug himself into a hole, primarily on account of last November's budget update. Monte Solberg, who used to serve in the Harper cabinet, said the PM's budget could lead to long-term deficits and criticized Mr. Harper for not offering the country a vision. Tasha Kheirridin of the Fraser Institute said conservatives feel betrayed by his budget.

For the strong-armed PM who once exerted absolute control, the lustre has worn off. His defenders say he had no choice but to bring in a liberal budget, that his minority would have been defeated if he had done otherwise. That may be true. But the no-choice scenario is one that was largely brought on by Mr. Harper himself.

His strategic budget-statement disaster of November reset the scales in the other side's favour. It resulted in a quick change in the Liberal leadership. Without that change, Liberals would presently be engaged in a divisive leadership fight. Mr. Harper would have had a free hand with the budget and other measures. It was his own failure to foresee the dismal economic tides (when most everyone else foresaw them) that led to his miscalculation of promising balanced budgets for years to come. He had to completely reverse himself. It was his government's excessive spending in the two years prior that needlessly depleted the big surpluses Ottawa previously enjoyed.

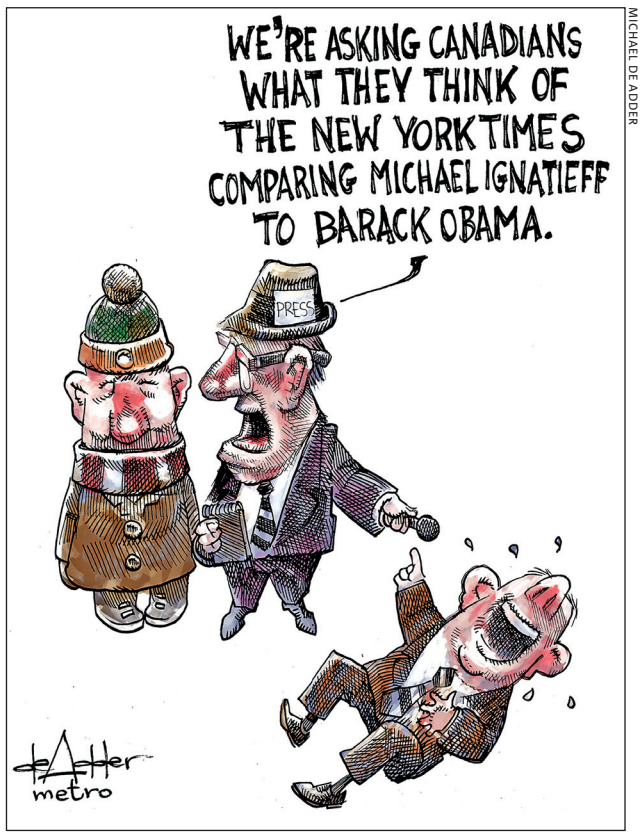
THE CANADIAN PRESS

With the trend swinging liberal to the south for the border and edging in that direction here, Mr. Harper realizes he has to start sounding more and more liberal to survive. He has to turn his back on his own hard-woven political philosophy. He can do that. He is a leader driven by power-lust and political calculations far more than public policy. Hence the Solberg criticism, echoed by many others, on his never having offered the country a vision.

But the problem in such circumstances is that given a choice between a faux liberal in Stephen Harper and a real one in Michael Ignatieff, people will opt for the real one.

The momentum is clearly on Mr. Ignatieff's side. Sensing this, realizing Mr. Harper has already had three electoral kicks at the can, Conservatives are starting to contemplate alternatives. Jim Prentice, Peter MacKay and Jason Kenney are the names most frequently mentioned. There is also a former leader of the federal Tories who is still at large in Quebec. His name is Jean Charest.

Lawrence Martin is a Globe and Mail correspondent and author who writes about national affairs from Ottawa.



MICHAEL DE ADDER

Views

Relief at pumps, but havoc on economy

InBusiness

Charles Davies

Veteran Business Writer

These are hard times in Canada's oilpatch. With crude hovering around $40 a barrel after averaging $100 through 2008, profits are slumping and belts are tightening. Earlier this week, Suncor Energy Inc., the leading oilsands producer and a bellwether for the energy sector, reported a fourth quarter loss of $215 million. It promptly whacked planned 2009 capital spending to $3 billion, less than a third of last year's total.

Canadians who were squeezed by historically high gasoline prices last year may have little sympathy, but they should. Today's lower pump prices are a relief, but the industry's slowdown has a far greater negative impact on all of us. Lower energy prices, the result of weakening demand as the recession gathers, mean weaker corporate revenues from domestic and export sales and, consequently, lower profitability. This leads to job cuts, reduced purchases from suppliers across the country, less capital-fuelled expansion and trimmed discretionary spending on everything from paper clips to philanthropy. The energy sector's weakness simply diminishes an already struggling economy, rather like bleeding a medieval invalid.

In Alberta, the key producing province, the number of oil rigs operating this year is the lowest in a decade. The province suffered a net loss of 15,800 jobs in December, nearly half the national total. Not all of those jobs were in the energy sector, but many were, and they generated income for thousands of Canadians who once hailed from locales as diverse as Newfoundland outports and hamlets on Vancouver Island. Worse still, the energy sector's workforce is expected to shrink a lot more in 2009. Add it all up and energy's contribution to gross domestic product, somewhere around 5.5 per cent normally, is taking a big hit.

Indirectly, the effects are no less severe. Alberta has collected $11 billion or more in energy royalties in each of the past three years, but it won't in 2009. Nor will other producing provinces match their previous totals. Provincial gasoline tax revenues, 16.5 per cent of the price of every litre sold, will fall, as will the 15.5 per cent share comprised of federal excise tax and GST. Lower tax revenues in the current climate mean bigger deficits and even harder choices for governments figuring out how to revive the economy.

For good measure, lower energy prices are further eroding our life savings. By weighting, the energy sector accounts for about 28 per cent of the S&P/TSX Composite Index. When energy shares fall, all investors feel the pain.

Charles Davies is a veteran business writer and editor who has worked for news organizations and publications including Business Week, Canadian Business, Report On Business magazine, Reuters, and Financial Post.

Letters

Nothing ugly about clean and stable energy source

Re: April Lindgren's column: Wind farm would be another ugly mistake (Jan. 30).

Since when is creating green energy ugly? I personally think the sight of our government trying to find an alternative energy source that is clean and stable and utilizes a renewable and free source — wind — to be quite beautiful.

I love passing the wind farm in Southern California where hundreds are lined up making nary a sound. Whenever we pass the giant turbine in the CNE grounds, my two-year-old son points and shouts "WENMALL, WENMALL!!!"

Why doesn't April Lindgren suggest another alternative to location before she bashes the whole idea to bits? I think the sight of a line of distant windmills is far more beautiful than a giant concrete nuclear reactor any day.

ALEXANDRA IRVING, TORONTO

Aesthetics not a reason to dump windmill proposal

I found it extremely disappointing that the main argument for not installing wind turbines off Toronto's eastern shoreline would be that they are ugly to look at.

I understand that there are rational reasons for not installing them in certain areas some of which include impact to wildlife, safety and noise. However, I don't think that aesthetics should be one of them. It is exactly this sort of attitude that will ruin the environment for future generations, and I would have expected a lot more from a professor who teaches this exact group.

If the author doesn't like the proposed solution to harvest a renewable energy, then she should at the very least suggest an alternative.

PARHAM MOFIDI, RICHMOND HILL

No signal, no TTC e-Alerts

TTC e-Alerts work great for email but if you are inside the station or sitting inside the subway there is no signal for cellphones, so how can we get e-Alerts inside the stations or subway? Also, TTC announcements about subway delays inside the subway is not very clear. I think TTC should make it so cellphones can get signals inside the stations and subway cars.

SIVAM MANICKAM, SCARBOROUGH

It's your turn to tell others what you think. E-mail your thoughts and opinions to: torontoletters@metronews.ca
Letters must include sender's full name, address and phone number – street name and phone numbers will NOT be published. We reserve the right to edit letters.

Toymaker sees sales of popular toys fall

Mattel said yesterday sales of Barbie fell 21 per cent and Hot Wheels declined 22 per cent as consumers cut spending during the weakest holiday season in decades. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Business

EDITOR: FERMIN DESOUZA, FERMIN.DESOUZA@METRONEWS.CA

CEOs take pay cuts

RBC chief leads way, turning down $5 million

The top executives at three of Canada's biggest banks are taking deep pay cuts after the financial crisis eroded profits and battered stocks.

Royal Bank of Canada's chief executive officer said yesterday he is voluntarily turning down $5 million in 2008 compensation. His counterpart at the Bank of Nova Scotia saw his pay package slashed by 20 per cent. And Bank of Montreal's CEO decided to give up $4.1 million in rewards.

For his part, RBC's CEO Gordon Nixon is forfeiting pricey elements of his pay package, including $2.75 million in deferred shares and $2.2 million in stock options. If he had accepted those perks, Nixon's total direct compensation — including salary, bonus and equity-based rewards — would have totalled $8.75 million. RBC failed to meet most of its 2008 financial goals and its full-year profits sank by 17 per cent. Last week, its stock hit a five-year low. Nixon said his decision was "personal" and unrelated to RBC's performance.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Retailer hikes late payment rate

CREDIT CARDS Canadian Tire Corp. has notified many of its cardholders that the annual rate of interest charged on late payments will rise next month to 19.5 per cent from the current 18.9 per cent. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Business in brief

LAYOFFS Lakeside Steel is temporarily laying off 84 hourly workers and has closed its plant in Welland, Ont., until next week. The layoffs are in addition to 61 in mid-January, and 40 in December. Lakeside makes pipe and mechanical tubing for the oil and gas, automotive, and mining sectors.

BUYOUTS General Motors and Chrysler are offering blue-collar employees another round of buyout and early retirement offers. Chrysler's early retirement package includes $50,000 cash and buyouts include $75,000 cash. GM is offering $20,000 for those who retire early or quit. METRO NEWS SERVICES

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Your Money

EDITOR: NINA DRAGICEVIC, NINA.DRAGICEVIC@METRONEWS.CA

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On the web

A reader asks:

"Over the past four years, my wife and I have contributed to our RRSPs. Soon, we plan to purchase our first home. Is this a good time to buy or should we wait another year or two? Can we withdraw the maximum $20,000 under the Home Buyer's Plan?"

- If you plan to live in the home, real estate will always be a good investment. Our federal government has made several initiatives to stimulate the housing sector.
- Read this week's column by Henry Choo Chong at metronews.ca

MoneyMatters

Henry Choo Chong
choochonghcga@yahoo.ca

Catching a tax break

SmartCookies

smartcookies.com

A week ago, the federal government unveiled the long awaited 2009 budget. Last year, with the introduction of the Tax Free Savings Account, the government was all about encouraging us to save — this year's message, however, is the opposite.

But before you run out and spend, spend, spend, read on to learn more about what this year's budget means to your bottom line.

With $40 billion in economic stimulus over the next two years, Canadians will now have more money in their pockets.

Tax breaks are being introduced across the board: The largest ones for Canadians who have the least, including low-income families and seniors. And for many Canadian families who have or will experience layoffs, the government has added an extra five weeks to the number of weeks an individual can receive in employment insurance and $1.5 billion is also being injected into job retraining programs.

The government estimates that 190,000 jobs will be created or saved, and the economy will grow by one per cent over the next two years, because of these and other initiatives.

We've also seen incentives for higher income families, which along with the aforementioned income tax breaks, include credits such as the home renovation tax credit. This year, a $1,350 credit is being offered to those who spend between $1,000 and $10,000 on home improvements.

Although we have seen dips in the real estate market, Smart Cookies still feel that real estate is one of the best investments you can make (provided you have the money for the down payment, can cover the monthly expenses and plan to stay in your home for at least three to five years).

This is why we are impressed to hear about incentives for first time homebuyers. The proposed budget includes a new first time homebuyers tax credit of $750 and an increase of $5,000 on what you can borrow from your RRSP for your down payment (taking to total up to $25,000).

What does all this mean to you? At the end of the day, a small tax credit is not going to make that much of a difference to your bottom line.

While it is great that Canadians will have more money in their pockets, we still have to be cautious as to where we are spending our money. Although it might help the economy if you go out and shop, renovate or purchase property, it's not going to advance you personally unless you can truly afford it.

Check out Smart Cookies on W Network, Mondays at 10:30 p.m. and visit smartcookies.com for more information on creating a spending plan, cutting debt and keeping your credit score high.

If you have questions or suggestions for the Smart Cookies, we'd love to hear them. E-mail us at smartcookies@metronews.ca.

Tune in Monday nights at 10:30 p.m. EST/PST on the W Network and be sure to visit smartcookies.com for more tips.

Investing

Allan Small

What opportunities are out there for investors? Read this week's column at metronews.ca

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Travel Feb 23 - Mar 3/aa + taxes & fees $124

Shanghai $849
Travel Feb 17 - Mar 4/ac + taxes & fees $315

Aussie Airpass $1499
Travel between May 1 - May 31/qf + taxes & fees $512

Holidays

NEW ENGLAND FLY & DRIVE $449
+ taxes & fees $122
INCLUDES roundtrip airfare to Boston and 7-day car rental to explore the New England coast at your own pace. Departs Apr 15/inf/aa.

London 7 Nights $599
President Hotel + taxes & fees $408
INCLUDES roundtrip airfare, transfers and 7 nights 3-star accom in Central London with breakfast daily. Departs Feb 22/vat/ts.

Event Holidays

NEW ORLEANS MARDI GRAS $998
Bienville House + taxes & fees $250
INCLUDES roundtrip airfare and 4 nights 3-star accom in the historic French Quarter during Mardi Gras. Departs Feb 22/inf/us.

Dublin St Patrick's Day $1099
Russell Court + taxes & fees $310
INCLUDES roundtrip airfare, 5 nights 3-star central accom located near nightlife & shopping over St Patrick's Day and Guinness brewery entrance ticket. Departs Mar 12/inf/kl.

Cruise Holidays

WESTERN CARIBBEAN 7 DAYS $593
Norwegian Perl + taxes & fees $116
INCLUDES 7-day NCL cruise, onboard meals & entertainment. Sail roundtrip from Miami and visit Roatan, Belize City, Cozumel and Great Stirrup Cay. Port charges included. Sails Feb 22.

Mediterranean 7 Nights $659
Voyager of the Seas + taxes & fees $87
INCLUDES 7-night Royal Caribbean cruise, onboard meals & entertainment. Sail roundtrip from Barcelona and visit Naples, Rome, Florence, Nice and Marseille. Port charges included. Sails Nov 15.

Alaska 7 Nights $729
Serenade Of The Seas + taxes & fees $121
INCLUDES 7-night Royal Caribbean cruise, onboard meals & entertainment. Sail roundtrip from Vancouver cruising the Inside Passage, Icy Strait Point and Tracy Arm Fjord and visit Skagway and Juneau. Port charges included. Sails May 30. UPGRADE to an oceanview cabin from $9 per night.

Middle East & Europe 12 Nights $1849
Legend Of The Seas + taxes & fees $53
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PUERTO PLATA 4-STAR $607
Bahia Principe San Juan + taxes & fees $315
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Cayo Coco 4-Star $685
Oasis Playa Coco + taxes & fees $210
INCLUDES roundtrip airfare, transfers and 7 nights 4-star all-inclusive accom. Departs Mar 3/swg/wg.

Cancun 4-Star $757
Oasis Palm Beach + taxes & fees $267
INCLUDES roundtrip airfare, transfers and 7 nights 4-star all-inclusive accom. Departs Mar 5/nol/5g. ADD horseback riding on the beach from $96.

Jamaica 4-Star $787
Holiday Inn Sunspree + taxes & fees $256
INCLUDES roundtrip airfare, transfers and 7 nights 4-star all-inclusive accom. Departs Mar 6/nol/ts.

Margarita Island 4-Star $797
LTI Costa Caribe Beach Hotel + taxes & fees $183
INCLUDES roundtrip airfare, transfers and 7 nights 4-star all-inclusive accom. Departs Mar 10/nol/ts.

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TICO

Cable company apologizes for porn interruption during Super Bowl
A cable television provider has apologized to Tucson, Ariz., area customers over a 30-second porn interruption during the Super Bowl. Philadelphia-based Comcast issued a brief statement yesterday saying the company is "mortified" and is conducting a thorough investigation. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Sports

Selig rakes in nearly $17.5M

Baseball commissioner Bud Selig, left, made more than all but three of his sport's players in 2007. Selig received a raise of about $3 million US to nearly $17.5 million that year, according to Major League Baseball's latest tax return. His compensation was listed at $17,470,491 for the 12 months that ended Oct. 31, 2007, according to the return, which is available at guidestar.org. That was up from $14,515,071 in the previous 12 months. METRO NEWS SERVICES

SPORTS@METRONEWS.CA

Bosh ain't going nowhere

Raptors star player, GM refute rumours that forward wants out of T.O.

Chris Bosh isn't going anywhere, both because of his own desire to turn around his team's fortunes and because the Raptors president and general manager continues to see him as the "cornerstone" of the franchise that has underachieved this season.

On another rocky day for a listing team that's 11 games below .500 and facing its most difficult three-game stretch of the season,

"Chris, as has been the case since I've been here, is the cornerstone of the franchise right now and that's how we're going to continue to look at it." Raptors GM Bryan Colangelo

Bosh and Bryan Colangelo spent time defusing a media report about the all-star's future and promising to find some way to turn things around this season.

With an emphatic "No. No. No, I have not told him that," Bosh shot down an ESPN report that he informed Colangelo that he would leave as a free agent in 2010, and said his only conversations with his boss have been about trying to make things better now.

"Me and Bryan talk about how to improve this team and what we can do to get better as far as personnel wise, pushing the guys, practising better and what I can do to get better," said Bosh.

Colangelo, while admitting his 19-30 team has "underachieved" this year, said he would not entertain any trade offers for his 24-year-old four-time all-star.

"He's not on the trade market, he's not informing anybody here that he's got intentions to do something different and 2010 is a long ways away for everybody," said Colangelo. "Chris, as has been the case since I've been here, is the cornerstone of the franchise right now and that's how we're going to continue to look at it." TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

MORE COVERAGE, PAGE 12

Sens axe head coach Hartsburg

NHL Craig Hartsburg is the latest coaching casualty of the Ottawa Senators.

Hartsburg

He's been fired just 48 games into his tenure and replaced by Cory Clouston on an interim basis.

Clouston becomes the fourth different man to assume the coaching duties since Ottawa appeared in the 2007 Stanley Cup final. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Toronto FC Training camp opens

NATHAN DENETTE/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Toronto FC soccer players run sprints yesterday as they take part in the official opening day of training camp at a covered BMO Field. The team also officially announced new deals for midfielders Rohan Ricketts and Carl Robinson, and striker Danny Dichio yesterday. TFC opens its season March 21 with a visit against the Kansas City Wizards. The team's home opener is April 4 against the expansion Seattle Sounders.

Super Bowl XLIII gets second-highest ratings in game's history

The Arizona-Pittsburgh matchup wasn't considered an ideal one for television, but its finish riveted an estimated U.S. audience of 95.4 million people, second only to last year's game as the most-watched Super Bowl ever. CTV carried the game in Canada, attracting an average audience of 3.602 million viewers. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Scandals aren't what they once were

YorkReport

Marty York

marty.york@metronews.ca

After three-plus decades in this racket (yes, I joined the media as a tot), I've learned to appreciate a good scandal as much as the next guy. OK, probably more.

But I'd like to think there should be a wee bit of substance to what babbling bloggers and television's talking twerps try to pass off these days as salacious scandals.

Sorry, but Jessica Simpson adding a few pounds does not merit mountains of copy and hours of bafflegab in the electronic media. It doesn't qualify as a legitimate scandal and neither, frankly, does Michael Phelps smoking pot. This is 2009, for crying out loud. Truth is, his bong may have been wrong but the media throng needs to move along and sing a different song. I don't indulge, never have, but you needn't be a pothead to realize smoking weed is no longer a dastardly deed. And Phelps' reputation as the most dominant swimmer in history isn't — and shouldn't be — damaged or tarnished.

Then there's Joe Torre's new book, The Yankee Years, which was supposed to be laden with 475 pages of scandals.

Puh-lease. Torre's lineup cards have contained more controversial writing than his book does. The book is a decent read but nowhere near as steamy as advance coverage pretended. Granted, the ex-Yankees-turned-Dodgers manager fires a few not-so-vicious zings at Alex Rodriguez, David Wells, George Steinbrenner and Yanks general manager Brian Cashman — and there are suggestions that ex-Blue Jays pitchers used amphetamines — but Torre's main message is that the Yanks have evolved from a team built upon draft choices and shrewd trades into one relying on high-priced free agents and neglecting its farm system. There are few revealing passages in The Yankee Years and, in reality, the book is devoid of genuine scandals.

U.S. sports journalist Stephen A. Smith tried to come up with one yesterday about the Raptors' all-star, Chris Bosh. Problem was, it wasn't accurate, always a prerequisite for a good scandal.

Smith claimed Bosh told Raptors management that he has no intention of staying with Toronto when his contract expires after the NBA's 2009-2010 season. Bosh, however, insisted he hasn't even thought about 2010 yet.

Ultimately, he may well follow in the footsteps of ex-Raptors stars Vince Carter, Tracy McGrady, Antonio Davis and others by bolting, but there's nothing to suggest this yet and so, sorry, but the Bosh story is no more scandalous than Torre's book or Phelps' pastime. Or Simpson's weight.

Starting today, we must pick ourselves up, dust ourselves off, and begin again the work of divulging genuine scandals.

Marty York has been a groundbreaking sports columnist and broadcaster in Canada for decades.

Jays to add Millar?

• Sources tell Metro sports columnist Marty York that: A) The Super Bowl champion Pittsburgh Steelers are about to sign Edmonton Eskimos offensive lineman Patrick Kabongo; and B) Veteran first baseman Kevin Millar likely will accept a minor-league contract offer from the Blue Jays.

Mets ink Perez to 3-year, $36M deal

MLB Oliver Perez and the New York Mets reached a preliminary agreement yesterday on a $36-million US, three-year contract.

Oliver Perez

The deal is subject to the pitcher passing a physical, two people familiar with the talks said, speaking on condition of anonymity because the agreement wasn't final. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sports in brief

MLB The Toronto Blue Jays have not added the next Daisuke Matsuzaka, or even the second coming of Kei Igawa in reaching a verbal agreement with Japanese veteran Ken Takahashi on a minor-league contract. The Takahashi deal, the team's first bringing a player over from Japan, is expected to be finalized in the next few days. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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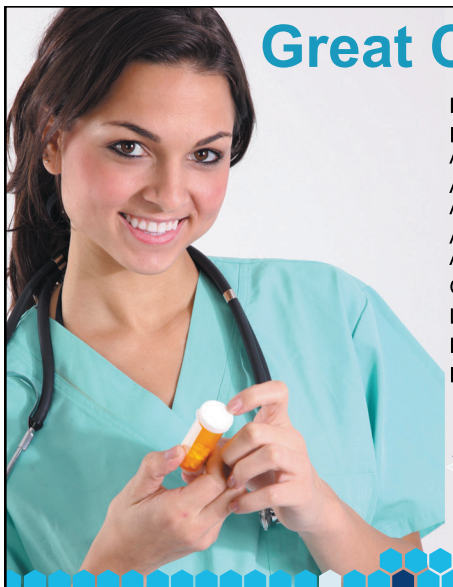

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Get ready for the market's recovery
Missing the best days of the market recovery can cripple your long-term returns. Rarely can anyone predict the bottom. One way to take advantage of the recovery and lower risk is to "average in" your investments when the markets are low. NEWS CANADA

RRSP Guide

'Don't lose twice'

"We are at or very near the point of maximum pessimism on the markets. It's time to be opportunistic," said Don Reed, president and CEO of Franklin Templeton Investments Corp. "Conditions are ideal to re-invest: Stocks are cheap and the markets are choppy. Investors lost when markets fell. Don't lose twice — be sure to act now before the recovery takes hold." NEWS CANADA

SPECIAL FEATURES EDITOR: STEPHANIE BOMBA, STEPHANIE.BOMBA@METRONEWS.CA

Small investments over a long period of time make a big difference, financial advisers say.

Invest while market is low

Now's the best time to do it, advisers say

ERIC EMIN WOOD
for Metro Canada

Despite the recent economic downturn, now is the time to open or invest in a Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP); it is not the time to walk away, experts say.

"When the market is booming, we're investing like crazy," says Judy Thomson, director of BMO retail investments.

"When the market is where it is today, we're terrified." Such investment psychology is flawed, Thomson says.

"You don't want to just take advantage of investing when it's up, you want to take advantage of investing when it's down and getting back up," she says.

An RRSP is like a basket, says Lee Anne Davies, head of advanced retirement strategies with RBC. "You can have different types of investments in this basket, including mutual funds, GICs, stocks, bonds or cash," she says. Not every item in the basket has been affected the same way.

"We recognize how stressful this time period is for many," says Davies. She encourages both veteran and potential investors to visit their bank's local branch and meet with a professional financial adviser, who can help them assess (or reassess) their goals and investments.

"Do your investments reflect your risk tolerance, goals and time horizon (number of years before you retire)? If so, there may not be a need to change anything."

Fifty per cent of Canadians haven't seen an adviser at all, says Thomson — even though it's free. "They'll spend more time planning their exercise routine, or a vacation, than thinking about their retirement," she says.

Thomson offers readers this sample plan: A 25-year-old who deposits $100 into an RRSP, she says, followed by $25 per week afterward, will have earned more than $380,000 when they turn 65. (These calculations are made using an average market return of eight per cent over the long term.) An investment of $50 per week leads to more than $765,000, while $100 per week becomes a little more than $1.5 million.

"Take advantage of investing when (the market is) down and getting back up." Judy Thomson

"We need to get people away from thinking, 'I've got to make such a huge investment!' to 'Small amounts of money over a long period of time make a huge difference,'" says Thomson.

The most important thing is for Canadians to continue moving toward their goals, says Davies. "Retirement's still going to happen," she says. "We know from history that markets come back, so keep investing, and get into the habit of saving on a regular basis."

'Pay yourself first,' expert urges

JON TATTRIE
for Metro Canada

Investing in your RRSP is generally a safe bet, but should you put in a little bit every month, or deposit a lump sum ahead of the March 2 deadline?

"That type of conversation is something that we have with quite a few of our clients," says Lee Ann Davies, head of advanced retirement strategies at the Royal Bank of Canada. "One of the things we're always interested in talking about is getting into the habit of paying yourself first."

Before you pay a salesman to give you a brand-new television, or pay a cook to make you a restaurant meal, pay yourself by socking a portion of your earnings into an RRSP. Most banks have systems set up where you can have a set amount of money automatically transferred from your savings account into your RRSP.

"You don't really notice that your money is being contributed to your investment because you just get used to that amount being gone." Lee Anne Davies

"You don't really notice that your money is being contributed to your investment because you just get used to that amount being gone."

In the current volatile market, Davies says regular RRSP investing gives you the advantage of "dollar-cost averaging." You can buy more when it's down and when it's up, you buy less but receive the advantage of the growth on your existing investments.

There are situations in which a lump-sum deposit makes sense, Davies says. She notes many people receive annual bonuses from their employer, or get paid on commission.

"It's also human nature — that tendency to want to procrastinate. That's where a professional adviser is helpful," she says. They can give you solid advice and act as a financial coach, encouraging you to contribute early and build toward long-term goals.

So invest regularly and when a windfall comes your way, throw that in as a lump sum. That may be best placed in your RRSP, or in other investments.

Davies says the question of how much you should put away depends on each person. "It comes down to your life stages, what's happening within your own family. People have all sorts of obligations, especially if they're in young families."

Mortgages and RESPs may take precedence over retirement savings when you divvy up your money. A financial adviser can help provide a "more holistic" view of your situation and find a monthly amount that makes sense for you, she says.

Before you pay money to eat out at a restaurant, pay yourself by putting a portion of your earnings into an RRSP, experts advise.

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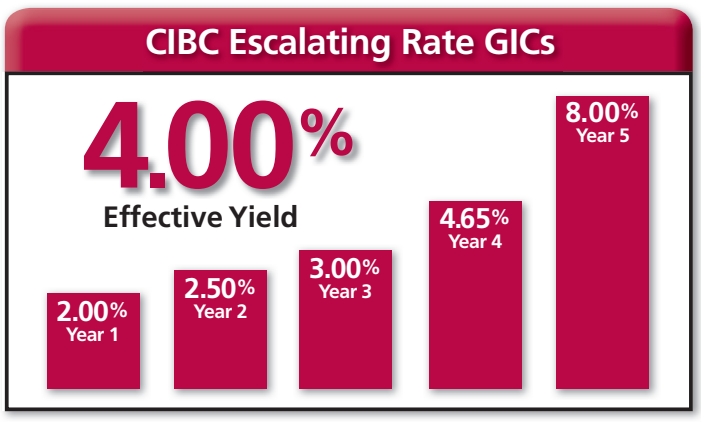

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Spousal RRSPs

Split income to save taxes. In the right situation, a spousal RRSP can still make sense to save taxes in your retirement. NEWS CANADA

More Canadians should be putting money away toward their nest egg because retirement isn't as far away as they may think, experts say.

Most Canadians lack financial plan: Survey

Poll also finds 40 per cent have no savings

BRIAN TOWIE
brian.towie@metronews.ca

"We spend more time thinking about our vacations than we do thinking about our retirement." Judy Thomson

Not even an economic downturn will convince Canadians to save for safety's sake, a survey from Bank of Montreal suggests.

The first of three national reports on spending and saving, which BMO conducted in December and published mid-January, says nearly seven out of 10 respondents admitted they do not have a financial plan in place, and more than 40 per cent of Canadians don't have any type of emergency savings set aside should their financial circumstances suddenly change.

But perhaps the most hackle-raising conclusion of all was that 80 per cent felt the economic downturn is not enough of an incentive to create a financial plan, says Judy Thomson, director of retail investments at BMO.

"Really, what does it take for people to know they need to have some kind of plan in place?" she said. "You'd have to be living in a cave somewhere not to have an understanding of the urgency that's going on in the market today. And these are recent findings, taken after the economy really started to hit people. It certainly surprises me.

"People have no idea of their cash flow — how much they're bringing in, how much they're spending. If they found themselves in an emergency, where would they go?"

There's a certain mindset that keeps Canadians from properly saving and investing, says Thomson. Those without savings plans assume they only exist for the wealthy, and the perilous habit of "get it now and pay for it later" dies hard.

"I think if you read everything about this downturn, it's that attitude that got us into this situation. You can see that across the border when it comes to housing," she said.

"We're avoiding dealing with it and the fact that so many are without a basic financial plan proves the point."

However, the report did make its brighter points despite all the doom and gloom.

Of those with RRSPs, the survey found Canadians felt they needed to exercise more caution. Nearly 70 per cent of Canadians with RRSPs say they will not need to withdraw from it to meet their financial needs, and 60 per cent say they'll contribute as much this year as they have before.

Thirty-eight per cent, however, say they don't plan to contribute this year, believing they'll need the money to get themselves through the tough times — a state of affairs that would be more easily weathered, Thomson says, if Canadians looked for help.

"We spend more time thinking about our vacations than we do thinking about our retirement. It seems so far away, and so complicated. It's not," she said. "You can go into a bank and get free advice from the most basic to the most complex. Dealing with an investment professional helps you understand what you're buying and establish a financial knowledge of what you already have."

Money management tips online

- Want to brush up on money management? The website fcac-acfc.gc.ca, run by the Financial Consumer Agency of Canada, features a variety of useful interactive tools to educate Canadians on financial literacy. Features include a mortgage calculator, reports on credit cards, their interest rates and tips on how to manage them, and guides to banking across the country.

Maximize your contribution

Borrowing can pay. Taking out an RRSP loan can, in many circumstances, be a smart way to maximize this year's contribution or to catch up on your past contributions. The key is to get a loan at a low-interest rate and pay it back as quickly as possible. You can even use your RRSP tax savings to help pay off the loan. **NEWS CANADA**

Tax-Free Savings Account has something for everyone

RAFAEL BRUSILOW
for Metro Canada

Tax-free savings — the idea sounds almost too good to be true, but it isn't. As of Jan. 1, all Canadians have access to the new Tax-Free Savings Account (TFSA), but how does it work?

Tom Hamza, president of the Investor Education Fund, a non-profit organization that promotes financial literacy across Canada, says the TFSA is meant to be a versatile partner to your RRSP, which allows you to save and take money out when you need it, tax free.

Other details about the TFSA include:

• Any Canadian over the age of 18 can open a TFSA and deposit up to $5,000 yearly into the account, regardless of your income level. RRSP contribution limits are tied to income.

• Your contribution limit grows by $5,000 yearly regardless of whether you put money into it.

• Money you earn in your TFSA doesn't count against you if you receive a government income supplement.

"This is a way to save some money and shelter the tax as the money grows," said Lee Anne Davies, head of advanced retirement strategies at RBC.

However, Davies points out that while money inside a TFSA is not taxed, the money you contribute to a TFSA is still taxable as part of your income. RRSP money, on the other hand, is tax refundable upon contribution and only gets taxed when you retire.

Hamza suggests that rather than trying to choose between a TFSA and an RRSP, use both to their full advantage.

"Anything you can do to keep money in your pocket instead of giving it to the tax person is a good thing," Hamza said.

You'll have more money growing inside your RRSP if you borrow to make the maximum yearly contribution.

Make most of savings

To make the most of the potential tax-saving and income-building advantages of your RRSPs, you should fill up every bit of your unused contribution room as quickly as you can.

Borrowing in order to contribute to your RRSPs could pay off in two ways: First, you'll increase the size of your tax refund, and second, you'll have more money growing inside your tax-deferred retirement plan.

Here's an example: Assume your RRSP contribution limit is $3,000 this tax year. Depending on your tax bracket, a $3,000 contribution could net you nearly $1,500 in tax savings in the form of a larger tax refund, while also potentially adding $30,188 to your retirement plan over 30 years (on a pre-tax basis, at an annual compound rate of eight per cent).

There are several important considerations when planning to borrow for RRSP investment purposes, such as:

• Borrow at a low-interest rate and pay off the loan quickly, otherwise the cost of borrowing can diminish your potential tax savings and investment returns.

• Financial institutions often offer RRSP loans (which are really loans meant only for the purpose of contributing to your RRSPs) at prime rate or lower.

• For top-up loans, limit the payback schedule to one or two years. For larger loans, don't exceed five years. **NEWS CANADA**

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Investing tip

Diversify for better, more assured growth. Because the government caps the amount you can contribute to your RRSPs, you'll likely need more income to afford the retirement of your dreams. A well-balanced portfolio is based on an asset allocation plan that matches your risk profile and time horizon. **NEWS CANADA**

Follow these RRSP dos and don'ts to maximize your savings

Contributing to your RRSP means tax-deferred savings today for money needed tomorrow. Even in tough economic times, you can maximize your savings with these dos and don'ts from TD Waterhouse:

• **DON'T** delay in starting to contribute to your RRSP. Put away as much as you can afford, as soon as you can. Even modest, regular contributions can build over the years into a significant retirement nest egg.

• **DO** maximize your contribution. Your annual RRSP contribution can greatly reduce the amount of income tax you pay in that year and the money you put away can have years of tax-deferred growth potential. If you are worried you do not have enough money to make your maximum contribution this year, consider borrowing money to contribute to your RRSP and then paying back your loan with your tax-refund.

• **DO** speak with an expert to get advice.

• **DO** contribute to a spousal RRSP. Spousal plans can be set up to split income for the purpose of saving on taxes in the retirement years. The purpose of a spousal RRSP is to shift RRSP assets to the lower income earner, so that at retirement the income from the plan is taxed at a lower marginal rate, resulting in tax savings.

NEWS CANADA

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Information session
Ryerson is holding an information session for people interested in its MBA programs on Feb. 11 at 6 p.m. For more, go to ryerson.ca/mba or e-mail mba@ryerson.ca. METRO NEWS SERVICES

MBA Guide

Guest lecture

Former Canadian prime minister Paul Martin will be at the University of Toronto's Rotman School of Management on Feb. 12 to discuss his book, Hell or High Water: My Life In and Out of Politics. Pre-registration is mandatory. For more, go to rotman.utoronto.ca/feb12, call 416-946-7462 or e-mail events@rotman.utoronto.ca.
METRO NEWS SERVICES

SPECIAL FEATURES EDITOR: STEPHANIE BOMBA, STEPHANIE.BOMBA@METRONEWS.CA

Canada moving on up

Financial Times ranks five schools among world's best

RAFAEL BRUSILOW
for Metro Canada

Canada's MBA schools are ranked highly in the world, a recent survey in the Financial Times shows.

In the ranking report, five Canadian MBA schools broke the top 100 in the world, with three of those schools breaking into the top 50.

The University of Toronto's Rotman School of Management and the Richard Ivey School of Business at the University of Western Ontario led the way tied for 47th place while York University's Schulich School of Business placed right behind them at 49th place in the overall rankings.

The Sauder School of Business at the University of British Columbia nabbed 71st place while the University of Alberta School of Business came in 77th.

"(The rankings show) that, in Canada, we have really good business schools to offer."
Jim Fisher

When ranked according to research, the Canadian schools did even better, all coming in the top 35 around the world.

Jim Fisher, vice-dean of the Rotman School of Management, said the rankings reveal that Canadian schools on the whole are on the cutting edge of business.

"It shows that, in Canada, we have really good business schools to offer," Fisher said.

The MBA surged in popularity in the 1990s and salaries ballooned. While current MBA salaries have remained relatively steady since then, Fisher says the increase in salary an MBA usually garners is still considerable.

"People, on average, double their income when they take an MBA. It remains a very valuable degree," Fisher said.

Nevertheless, the challenge of obtaining an MBA cannot be understated, Fisher says, but taking the effort can be well worth it, particularly since many types of upper-level jobs in the business world tend to require an MBA. The business contacts you can garner alone can make a huge difference in your future prospects.

"It is one hell of a lot of work to get an MBA — it is years of absorption — but it enables you to do your job better and you end up with friends and contacts for life," Fisher said.

Randy Pilon, CEO of Virox Technologies Inc. in Oakville, decided to do an MBA despite already owning his own company. He believes his MBA was crucial in helping him run his business better.

"I just believe that education is a continuing process and you need to stay current. An MBA is a mechanism by which you create value for a company. It's a tool," Pilon said.

Pilon says he sees an MBA as an asset when hiring, although you still have to show you can take what you've learned and excel.

"An MBA's going to get your foot in the door, but you still have to prove that your value is sustainable, that you can add value to the business."

It is believed people double their income when they have an MBA.

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Program puts students on fast track

LEYLA EMORY
for Metro Canada

Living in the fast lane requires learning at the same pace. A number of Canadian MBA programs are providing just that.

Accelerated MBA programs are a more concentrated version of the traditional MBA. They are an option for business undergraduates who have had at least two years of work experience in a relevant field. But they differ in relation to the needs of their students.

"Accelerated programs vary depending on who the audience is," says Michael Darling, director of MBA for business graduates at Queen's School of Business. While schools like Schulich offer a reduced time span — course-credit hours can be reduced to 30 from 60 — others like Queen's cater to the time frame of working students. "Our audience is people who are working full time who want to be able to this without quitting their jobs and having to go back to the job market," says Darling.

While not all schools offer accelerated MBA programs, those that do are often equipped to function out of multiple locations. "Our program is offered across Canada," says Amber Wallace of external relations at Queen's School of Business. "We have boardroom learning teams in Vancouver, Calgary, Mississauga, downtown Toronto, Montreal, etc. Our professors lecture from a studio on campus. It's interactive, so in the boardroom learning teams, you're there with your team and you hear the lecture and you can talk amongst yourselves."

An accelerated MBA program can cater to working students.

Although there's no price difference in an accelerated versus a full-time MBA at Queen's, the ability to keep working makes the financial burden easier to bear. "I liked the fact that I could continue to work," says Catherine Taylor, who is in her first month of the 12-month program. "It's a bad time to not have a job, and it could fund the MBA. That was a big factor for me."

With four years of work experience and a B.Comm. from the University of Guelph, Taylor is typical of the students in the accelerated program at Queen's. Like her peers, she's already familiar with the core courses from her undergraduate degree and has had a chance to apply them in a work environment.

"(An accelerated MBA) is a way to build on top of an undergraduate degree in business and not waste the time of students who have already taken these subjects," says Darling. Instead, it's geared to "give them a really clear and meaningful sense of what it means to lead and be strategic."

Morning classes ideal for full-time employees

ERIC EMIN WOOD
for Metro Canada

Students interested in earning an MBA who don't have time to attend evening or weekend classes now have a solution, thanks to the University of Toronto's morning MBA program.

"People have very busy lives that often don't allow them to study in a full- or part-time evening program," says Richard Powers, associate dean and executive director of MBA programs at U of T's Rotman School of Management.

The idea behind the morning MBA is simple: Classes are held two days a week, from 7-9 a.m. "We're four minutes from the subway, and we guarantee you'll be out by nine," says Powers, who developed the program. Like the part-time evening program, the morning MBA forgoes an internship and can be completed within three years.

"I thought there was a segment of the market whose needs weren't being met," he says. "They didn't wish to leave a job for financial reasons, or their schedules, whether it was family or personal or business, did not allow them to attend classes at 6:30 at night."

Powers did some research and was surprised to discover "nobody had ever done it. In fact, our dean's first response was, 'Maybe there's a reason for that,'" he says.

So far, the program has been successful, with more than 30 students enrolled in 2007, and more than 40 enrolments in 2008. "Students have found it's easier to come into work a little bit later in the morning than it is to leave earlier in the evening," says Powers.

The program is challenging, yet manageable, says Louise Biggar, a morning MBA student who will graduate in 2011. "I think what's special about (it) is the average work experience is much greater than a full-time MBA student," she says. "Often when we do group projects, my classmates will bring their experience to bear, and it makes for a much richer class discussion."

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Wilfrid Laurier will be holding an information session for potential students on Feb. 7, from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Delta Meadowvale in Mississauga. For more, go to wlu.ca. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Brock team fourth in world

ROBYN YOUNG
for Metro Canada

Up against schools with names like the University of Kaiserslautern (Germany), Glen Skrubbeltrang was shocked his MBA group ranked fourth in one of the business world's most prestigious case competitions.

The Brock University MBA student and his three teammates placed first in Canada and fourth overall at the 2009 John Molson MBA International Case Competition last month.

They finished just behind the University of South Carolina, Helsinki School of Economics and the University College Dublin Smurfit Graduate Business School.

The 35-year-old says the keys to their success were staying focused and having good group dynamics.

"We had a really good group of people that were not only smart academically but were smart in the tangible, business-world experiences," he said.

In addition, he said, Brock University's MBA program prepared them for the rigours of business outside the classroom.

"For a relatively new program, it's extremely in-depth," he said.

The co-owner of Niagara manufacturer Fibreline Truck Caps will graduate in December and said he's not sure what he'd like to do next but he's looking forward to the challenge.

He's enrolled in Brock's accelerated Certified Management Accountant (CMA) stream of the MBA program, which puts him further ahead on his path toward becoming a CMA.

Shari Sekel, director of graduate programs for the faculty of business, said the university couldn't be happier with Skubbeltrang and his teammates for their performance.

"We're exceptionally proud of them for a couple of reasons: First of all, obviously, for their success. They've gone there and they've represented our programs, our faculty and the calibre of their colleagues very well," she said.

And secondly, this is the first year a student group from Brock has entered the competition.

"We were very fortunate because each of the four team members that represented our university and our program was of the absolute highest quality," she said.

The international competition is a not-for-profit event organized by a team of four MBA students from the John Molson School of Business at Concordia University in Montreal. It's the largest competition of its kind.

BROCK UNIVERSITY PHOTO

The winning team, clockwise from top left: Russ Evans, Bryceson Dodge, Glenn Skrubbeltrang, Paula Johnson and Michelle Lysak.

Laurier students getting free BlackBerrys in August

ROBYN YOUNG
for Metro Canada

MBA students at Wilfrid Laurier University are about to become the first in the country issued BlackBerry smartphones as a mandatory course requirement.

Graduating student Josh Siegel said the initiative, which provides all full-time MBA students starting in August 2009 with the mobile devices, is a great opportunity he's sorry to miss out on.

"Having that ability to integrate that into the MBA program is phenomenal," said the president of the school's MBA Student Society.

Having all your course materials pre-loaded into a mobile device — it will just make life that much easier, he added.

The 26-year-old was part of the working world before attending Laurier and said he knows the importance of being connected.

"Coming out of the MBA program, absolutely everyone is going to be in some sort of position where you need to be comfortable with mobile technology," he said.

Ginny Dybenko is the dean of Laurier's School of Business and Economics and it was her decision to give the idea a trial run.

A delegate from Mexico's Tecnologicó de Monterrey came for a visit and told her the tech school was already experimenting with BlackBerrys in the classroom.

"So I said, 'My gosh, we're right here in the city, we have to do that,'" Dybenko said.

As part of the community where BlackBerry's creator Research In Motion (RIM) grew up, the career businesswoman felt it would only make sense for a Waterloo school to be the first in the country adding the device to its programs.

Students will initially be able to access about 30 per cent of course material through their BlackBerrys; next, the school hopes to use the mobile devices to simplify administrative tasks such as course registration; and finally, Dybenko said she hopes to see some of the students developing applications relevant to the program.

In its pilot year, the smartphones will be free, Dybenko said.

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RYERSON UNIVERSITY

York comes out on top

York's Schulich School of Business' MBA program has been ranked No. 1 in Canada in the field of corporate social responsibility. The survey, by Corporate Knights magazine, assessed how well Canadian business schools are integrating corporate social responsibility issues into the curriculum. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Ryerson team two-time winners

LEYLA EMORY
for Metro Canada

RYERSON UNIVERSITY PHOTO

The winning Ryerson students, from left: Luke Southern, Renice Jones, Christine Bergen and Beverly Nollert.

They may be young but they're not naive.

Only two-years-old, Ryerson's Ted Rodgers School of Management has won the coveted academic category at the MBA Games twice.

The repeat performance at this year's games, held at Dalhousie University over the weekend of Jan. 2, came with the added glory of a second-place finish in the spirit category. Judged on academics, spirit and athletics, the MBA Games are an opportunity for Canadian MBA programs to showcase their talent.

One such talent is Beverly Nollert. In early September, she went in front of a panel of Ryerson profs and MBA grads and did a 15-minute presentation on a case she had only 90 minutes to prepare for. This landed her one of four spots on the strategic case team, which, along with a finance and marketing team, comprises the academic portion of the competitors.

Nollert's team won first place in the strategy competition. Combined with the high-ranking scores of both marketing and finance, Ryerson was awarded first place in the academic category.

Nollert credits this sort of teamwork for giving Ryerson its edge. "We don't go into competitive mode." And she credits Dr. Dale Carl, director of Graduate Students and the team's coach, for fostering this mentality. "Once the team is formed, he teaches us how to work together rather than against each other. He devotes a lot of time and has a lot of experience and is just really effective as a coach ... He gets the whole class excited about the MBA Games."

Like their teamwork, the excitement also paid off. Nollert and 39 of her teammates ranked second in the spirit category. "We were really stoked about that," says team captain John Riccio. "It showed that we're good sports and well-rounded, doing our school proud and showing that we're proud of our school."

How to make the most of attending an MBA fair

- **Prepare.** "Do as much research as you can before the fair itself," says Spencer Matheson, North American tour director for the QS World MBA Tour. Check the fair's website to see which schools are coming, and take note of the ones you are interested in. Next, spend some time on the school's website. "It's counterproductive if you're asking questions about information you can find easily on the website," says Patty Katsaros, North American director for The MBA Tour.
- **Ask specific questions.** "One of the most critical things that someone can do is sit down and say, 'What are the key criteria or deal-breakers for me in an MBA program?'" says Niki Healey, director of MBA admissions at the Richard Ivey School of Business. "Come up with a list of questions that will test for those deal-breakers."
- **Explore the fair.** MBA shows offer more than information booths. Take advantage of school presentations, panel discussions and seminars.
- **Follow up.** You have their contact info; now keep in touch. Anything from sending a thank you note to asking further questions will make you stand out in the minds of admissions officers, says Healey.

The QS World MBA Tour (topmba.com) comes to the Metro Toronto Convention Centre on Feb. 28, from 3 to 6 p.m.

The MBA Tour (thembatour.com) is tentatively scheduled to be in Toronto on Nov. 14. Venue TBA.

EVA LAM/FOR METRO CANADA

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Workology

EDITOR: DOUGLAS DUNLOP, DOUGLAS.DUNLOP@METRONEWS.CA

Coaching corporations

Job Trends

ROBYN YOUNG
for Metro Canada

Tough times call for drastic measures — or at least a fresh perspective.

Which may be exactly why the phenomenon of work/life coaching continues to grow as the world economy shrinks.

Different from a counsellor, a coach works with individuals to develop their strengths and realize their potential in the workplace.

Unlike a psychotherapist who works with a client to examine and diagnose past behaviours, a career or work/life coach focuses on effecting change in a client's current and future behaviour in their professional life.

Toronto-based work/life coach Eileen Chadnick says during economic uncertainty, a coach can help employees develop optimism and resilience.

"Giving people a say in how they bring themselves to their work life is very empowering," said Chadnick of Big Cheese Coaching.

Learning how to say no, how to delegate or how to manage a workload are some of the things Chadnick works on in coaching sessions — either in person at her home office or over the phone.

ROBYN YOUNG/FOR METRO CANADA

Eileen Chadnick of Big Cheese Coaching works from her home office in Toronto where she sees clients in person or coaches them over the phone.

"It's a really smart employer that recognizes that you have to invest in your people." Eileen Chadnick

The concept of work/life coaching as a recognized discipline can be traced back to the 1970s.

Chadnick works with individuals and corporations on action plans.

The former fitness instructor and marketing professional who now splits her time between communications consulting and work/life coaching says many of her clients are emerging leaders recognized by their employers as "high potentials."

Corporations and organizations hire Chadnick to work with individuals or teams within the company.

Essentially, she said, coaching is about keeping the keepers — those who keep the organization afloat — and growing the keepers.

"It's a really smart employer that recognizes that to engage people … you have to invest in your people and not just push and prescribe," she said.

You have to grow and develop them, investing in them as people and individuals who bring a show of talents to the organization, she added.

"Employees become more invested in it and feel more appreciated," she said.

The award-winning work/life coach also meets with individuals seeking support independent from their employers.

Some of her clients just need assistance clarifying what a meaningful career path looks like for them, or what their next step might be, she said.

"How do you manage the parts that might be getting in the way, or how do you develop the parts that need a little development," she said.

Employees can positively impact their "outer game" by changing their "inner game," she said.

For more information about finding an accredited coach in your area, the ICF hosts a free searchable directory of coaches with an ICF Credential called the Coach Referral Service (CRS) on its website, coachfederation.org.

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Some programs longer than one year.

Spyware, malware and risk downloads factored heavily in IT professionals' concerns, with three out of five IT pros saying Gen Yers' use of third-party downloadable software was troubling.

IT companies worry over Gen Y's tech use

RAFAEL BRUSILOW
for Metro Canada

Companies love the creativity and enthusiasm young workers bring to the table but are terrified of their security habits, a new study by Intel Corporation shows.

The study surveyed a pool of information-technology (IT) specialists at a variety of companies and found that while 75 per cent of IT professionals surveyed believed Gen Yers — people under the age of 28 — positively impacted the companies they work for, 50 per cent of them also believed Gen Yers are a major source of security concerns.

Social networking sites like Facebook and Myspace, highly popular among Gen Yers, were perceived as a threat to security due to the speed and scale at which information can be spread and exchanged on those sites. Generation Y's extensive use of mobile personal communication devices like Blackberries and the iPhone also worried companies in the study, concerned open collaboration could lead to security leaks.

Spyware, malware and risks downloads also factored heavily in IT professionals' concerns, with three out of five IT pros saying Gen Yers' use of third-party downloadable software was troubling.

Despite the concerns however, the study showed many companies are starting to relax their security policies, with 60 per cent allowing company e-mail to be sent to personal smartphones, 39 per cent allowing outside personal computers to connect to the company network and 34 per cent letting employees use social networking sites at work.

Elaine Mah, a business marketing manager for Intel Canada, says the study highlights how many companies are realizing Gen Yers' work habits can be beneficial to the bottom line when properly managed.

"Work behaviour is evolving. A few years ago it was unthinkable for IT departments to allow e-mail to be sent to personal data devices — now those changes are happening as we recognize the utility of that kind of work environment," Mah said.

Collaboration is one of Gen Y's greatest strengths, Mah said, and harnessing that spirit of teamwork by allowing Gen Yers to use the technological tools they're comfortable with will be crucial for companies to succeed in the future.

"Organizations realize they can't just create a walled garden. Technology has evolved and we need that creativity and collaboration that a Gen Yer might bring to an organization," Mah said.

Mah said trying to put a lid on Gen Yers' communication habits by prohibiting the use of various communication devices and services — even those deemed relatively risky, such as social networks — is a losing proposition anyways as Gen Yers are skilled at using technology to skip over roadblocks.

"It's their natural instinct to say, 'If you put me in a corner, I'll find a workaround,'" Mah said.

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Health & Beauty

EDITOR: ANN-MARIE COLACINO, ANN-MARIE.COLACINO@METRONEWS.CA

Tummy tucks on the rise

Skin remnants of obesity have surgeries skyrocketing

She was a big baby. In the picture it is 1953 and her older sister Shirley is straining to hold a beaming Ruth Mathews up for the camera.

As the years unfold in her photo album, Mathews' size grows progressively larger. Then alarming.

In a 2004 shot, at age 51, Mathews is a morbidly obese diabetic and a mostly miserable 354 pounds.

Then comes the great reversal. By dint of diet, exercise and the will to eschew pizza in particular, the 5-foot-6 school bus driver shrinks to 169 pounds.

But like the growing number of morbidly obese people now losing enormous amounts of weight, mostly through stomach stapling surgeries, Mathews had a problem. As all that fat disappeared, the skin that held it all did not.

"I had all this skin that would flop around when I walked," says Mathews, the mother of two grown children. "You sort of tuck it into your pants, but it's still there. Imagine losing all the weight and having to be stuck with all that skin."

These remnants of obesity — known medically as cutis pleonasmus — have sent "tummy tuck" surgeries skyrocketing.

"It's been a six-fold increase in the past five years," Dr. Michael Kreidstein says of the number he now performs at The Scarborough Hospital.

"I had all this skin that would flop around when I walked... Imagine losing all the weight and having to be stuck with all that skin."
Ruth Mathews

The Canadian Society of Plastic Surgeons does not keep statistics on the type and number of operations its 400 members perform, but society executive director Karyn Wagner says U.S. data likely reflects the Canadian situation.

In the U.S., tummy tucks increased by 137 per cent between 2000 and 2007, when the number reached 148,000. Wagner concludes about 15,000 were performed in this country that year.

Bariatric surgeries (known as gastric bypasses or stomach stapling), which segment or bypass large portions of the stomach, are growing as a mainstream tool to reverse morbid obesity. Last year, a major study pegged these operations as a potential cure for weight-related Type 2 diabetes.

During the procedure, the excess skin is lifted from underlying muscle tissue — on rare occasions with the help of a mini-crane that hangs over the operating table.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

In the U.S., tummy tucks increased by 137 per cent between 2000 and 2007. The Canadian Society of Plastic Surgeons says U.S. data likely reflects the Canadian situation.

Ontario coverage

• OHIP pays for about 500 bariatric surgeries (known as gastric bypasses or stomach stapling) procedures each year, although the province's Medical Advisory Secretariat has said that number will have to increase by some 3,000 to keep up with demand.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Amazing avocados

FOOD With the limited variety of local fruits available in winter, avocados — and their many nutrients — are worth adding to your diet. Look for the rough-skinned Hass variety from Mexico or California currently in stores.

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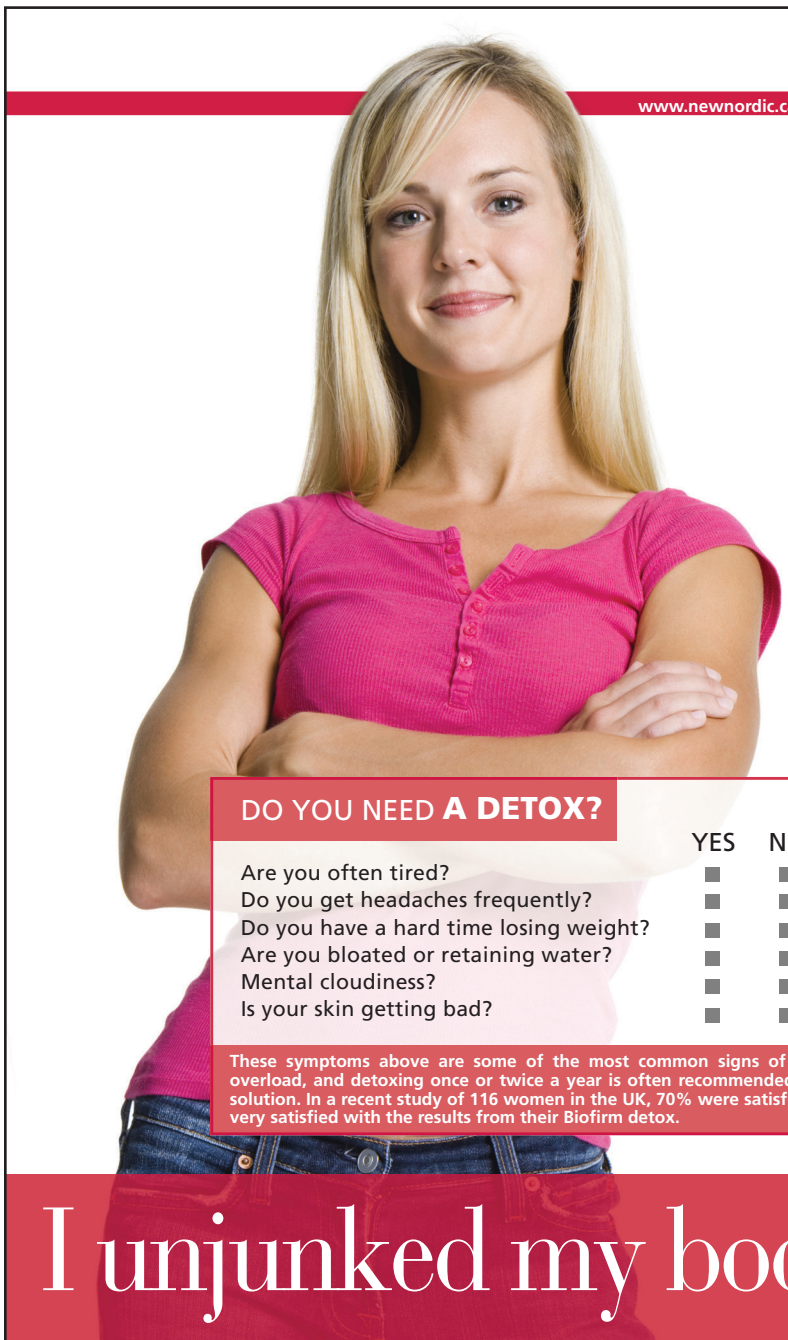

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I unjunked my body!

Lina works in the fitness industry in Ottawa and recently came across an article on detoxing. Here is her story;

"I was having a hard time losing those stubborn extra pounds and I was tired a lot, which showed in my face. So when I came across a Biofirm story in the local newspaper, it made me curious.

It definitely made sense to me that we get tired and bloated from too many toxins in our foods and from our environment. But I didn't know that it made us gain weight! So I purchased a box of Biofirm and took the recommended 6 tablets a day for a month with lots of water and high-fibre foods. I was determined to unjunk my body!"

I lost 11 pounds on the detox!

"In the first 4 weeks I lost 7 pounds. I definitely felt lighter and my skin was looking great – I was glowing! I had read that it could be unpleasant to take Biofirm but I actually enjoyed it, especially because you are still able to do your daily duties. You don't have to stay home or do it on the weekends.

After the 30 days detox, I wanted to continue, so I bought another 14 days of tablets. Again, I lost another 4 pounds and my clothes were getting very loose! I was thrilled - and the great part is that I didn't have to exercise vigorously for 6 weeks!!"

– Line B., Ottawa

DETOXING: A GREAT WAY TO START A HEALTHIER LIFE

Everyday, our bodies are exposed to toxins from the air we breathe, the water we drink and especially the processed foods we eat. If our bodies get overburden with toxins, our liver suffers and we start seeing the effect on our health; Our skin is affected, we get tired, we retain water, get headaches, digestion problems, bad breath and find it especially hard to lose weight.

Researchers have now discovered the biological cause of those stubborn pounds; Toxic particles bind water in the bodies' soft tissue and inhibit your metabolism from burning fat efficiently. The Conclusion: To lose weight, you must first cleanse your body!

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Love is all in a smell

Can you identify your partner's armpit odour?

The J Spot

Josey Vogels

Sex talk with Josey

Recent research shows women in love were able to pick out their boyfriend's body odour (off a T-shirt) 5.2 out of seven tries.

According to new research published in the Journal of Hormones and Behaviour, the more in love you are with your guy, the better the chances you'll pick his smelly armpit out of a crowd.

The research involved having women sniff the T-shirts of boyfriends, male friends and strangers who had been wearing them for a week. Women in love were able to pick out their boyfriend's body odour 5.2 out of seven tries.

The researchers call it the "deflection theory," and argue that the more in love you are with your guy, the less likely you'll identify with the body odour of a male friend or stranger and be tempted to stray.

This isn't the first research on the role smell plays in attraction. American scientist Jim Kohl has been sniffing around the relationship between sex and smells for well over a decade. He says you could like everything about someone but if you don't like the way they smell, forget it. Especially if he or she smells like someone you've turned up your nose at in the past.

"In reality," says Kohl, "we make the odour association first and the visual association thereafter." Blame it on TV — we've become a visual society, plus the fact that walking up to someone and taking a big whiff might be considered a tad impolite.

Researchers at the Smell and Taste Treatment and Research Foundation in Chicago did a study years ago that revealed that 90 per cent of patients who had lost their sense of smell as a result of head trauma had sexual dysfunction.

They then decided to test floral and perfume smells on men to see how different odours might affect sexual response. One researcher threw in a fake cinnamon bun smell for fun and surprisingly, it got the most, er, enthusiastic response. They decided to test a whole slew of food odours and discovered that most food smells tested increased penile blood flow.

The more in love you are with your guy, the less likely you'll identify with the body odour of a male friend or stranger and be tempted to stray.

But, before you go spreading cinnamon toast all over your body girls, considering the guys in the study got most turned on by pumpkin pie, researchers admit it could just be a case of feel-good nostalgia.

Kohl agrees that a big part of smell response goes back to memory and learned associations. He calls this "olfactory imprinting" and likens it to visual imprinting for a duck. "If the first thing a baby duck sees is its mother, it will follow her around. If it sees a basketball, it'll follow that. Same with olfactory imprinting."

Following this logic, if you like the smell some guy leaves on your pillow, then you'll probably start following him around, too.

Josey Vogels is a sex and relationship columnist and author of five books on the subjects. For more info, visit joseyvogels.com.

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The right fitness mindset

The Biggest Loser's Jillian Michaels shares her health secrets

PETRA AXLUND
Metro World News

This is the year you are going to get healthy. So now where to begin?

"The first thing you have to do is to get real with yourself and find the right mindset," says Jillian Michaels, fitness and health guru from TV's The Biggest Loser.

It is easy to be good, go to the gym and work hard for a week or two. But to keep it up and make it a part of your life is another story. The secret to health success is to establish a long-term goal.

"You can't achieve success if you are not moving toward something," says Michaels.

"Put all your goals on paper, make a life list and let that be your motivation."

But Michaels points out that it's not as easy as it sounds, the key is to have an ultimate goal that is both ambitious and attainable.

HAYLEY GREEN/METRO WORLD NEWS

Fitness guru Jillian Michaels, front, of TV's The Biggest Loser says fitness success is achieved by changing negative self-images.

"If you set your goals too high that is a sure way to fail," she warns.

The other big secret to future success is psychological. A big part of reaching goals is about changing your attitude toward yourself and your body. If you have a negative self-image and lack self-confidence, if you feel powerless and subconsciously believe you're going to fail — you will.

"Our minds are our strongest tool and the way you think of yourself manifests as your reality. It becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy," says Michaels.

"You need to make the voice inside your head say that you can do it and that you are worth it."

Jillian's Tips

- Keep a fitness diary. No matter what your goals are, the best way to reach them is to write them down.
- Remind yourself of your goals. Think about them when you wake up in the morning and before you go to bed every night. Reaffirm your believes in your self and think of yourself as strong, healthy and happy.
- Identify your emotional triggers. Break bad habits and put yourself back in control by identifying what triggers you to overeat. It might be that you eat too much when you are sad, angry, bored or anxious. Every time you want to eat, ask yourself: Why?

PETRA AXLUND/ METRO WORLD NEWS

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What causes hereditary hair loss?

Each hair grows from a pocket in the skin called the hair follicle. During its growing phase, the follicle has a bulb-shaped bottom, the center of which is called the dermal papilla. The papilla is fed by very small blood vessels, which bring it food & oxygen and remove wastes. The papilla is highly sensitive to hormones and chemicals secreted by the body *(or ingested as a medicine)* which impacts hair growth.

It is believed that some individuals have a genetic predisposition to a receding hairline *(most common in men)* or hair/follicle thinning over larger areas of scalp *(more common in women)*. These conditions result from hormonal changes caused by an enzyme in the dermal papilla called 5-alpha-reductase. This enzyme breaks down the hormone testosterone into dihydrotestosterone *(DHT)*.

Over a period of time, an over abundance of DHT causes the hair follicle to degrade and shortens the active phase of the hair, eventually leading to thinner hair and eventual hair loss.

How does BIO-FEN PLUS™ *work?*

Specific compounds within the herbal extracts inhibit the 5-alpha-reductase *(and therefore reduce DHT)* to prevent or slow down the rate of hair loss. This process is the principle by which the prescription drugs such as Propecia *(finasteride)* work. However, BIO-FEN PLUS™ also contains additional compounds which remove excess cholesterol and testosterone – the building blocks of DHT.

BIO-FEN PLUS™ also contains vitamins to increase blood flow to the small capillaries that feed the hair roots, to deliver the active herbal compounds and remove waste. **Therefore, BIO-FEN PLUS™ provides a natural, safer alternative to expensive drugs, and/or expensive & painful hair transplants.** As with the prescription alternatives, results vary from person to person, and no one product will work for everyone.

How long must I use BIO-FEN PLUS™ *?*

BIO-FEN PLUS™ capsules are usually effective at stopping hair loss within the first two months. However, since healthy hair grows only about 1 cm each month, it may take up to three months before you notice that hair growth is increased or further hair loss is stopped.

Anyone experiencing new growth will see it within four to six months. Once results become apparent, some users are able to reduce their BIO-FEN PLUS™ supplement dose to one capsule every second or every third day. Some clients will continue to take BIO-FEN PLUS™ daily. Once you stop completely, however, your hair growth pattern will slowly go back to the point where you started.

How safe is BIO-FEN PLUS™ *?*

The ingredient combination in BIO-FEN PLUS™ is generally safe for most adults. However, the following cautions are advised:

Folic acid: Consult a health care practitioner if you are uncertain whether or not you are taking adequate vitamin B12, as folate supplementation can mask a Vitamin B12 deficiency.

Vitamin B3: Consult a health care practitioner prior to use if you have impaired liver function.

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What is the quality of BIO-FEN PLUS™ *?*

BIO-FEN PLUS™ is manufactured in Canada according to a quality assurance program called Good Manufacturing Practices *(GMP)*. This ensures that the ingredients are tested for their level of quality, potency & purity, prior to production and again prior to sale.

See our website to locate your nearest Health Food Store or Pharmacy that offers BIO-FEN PLUS™ and other quality products from Hair Grow Technology. If you have any questions or comments about our products that target hair loss and support the growth of strong, healthy hair, please do not hesitate to contact us.

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D-calcium pantothenate *(Vitamin B5)*	10.40 mg
Niacinamide *(Vitamin B3)*	10.25 mg
Pyridoxine HCl *(Vitamin B6)*	2.00 mg
Riboflavin *(Vitamin B2)*	1.58 mg
Folic acid	0.095 mg
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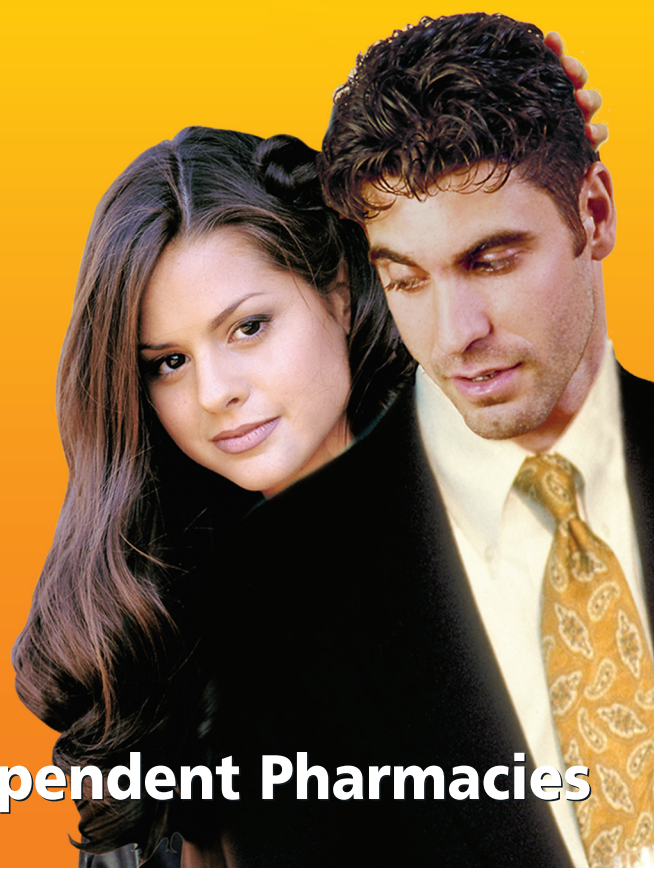

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Women notice bad 'dos

CELIA MILNE
for Metro Canada

OK guys. What part of you do you think women notice first?

Duh! Your hair, of course!

A recent study by AXE in the U.S. reveals that 74 per cent of women notice hair as the number one feature when looking at a guy. But men have their heads in the sand. Only 29 per cent of guys think that hair is an important factor in attracting women.

The survey, which polled 2,000 American women, found all kinds of ways bad hair may be leaving guys stranded:

- Almost half (44 per cent) of female respondents are unlikely to date a guy with bad hair.
- 62 per cent of women are unlikely to take a guy with a bad coiff home at the end of the evening.
- 62 per cent of women find dirty or greasy hair repulsive.
- 43 per cent of women surveyed strongly agree that hard, crusty, over-gelled hair can be a real turn-off.

Why do guys have bad hair? Sixty-three per cent of women attribute it to laziness.

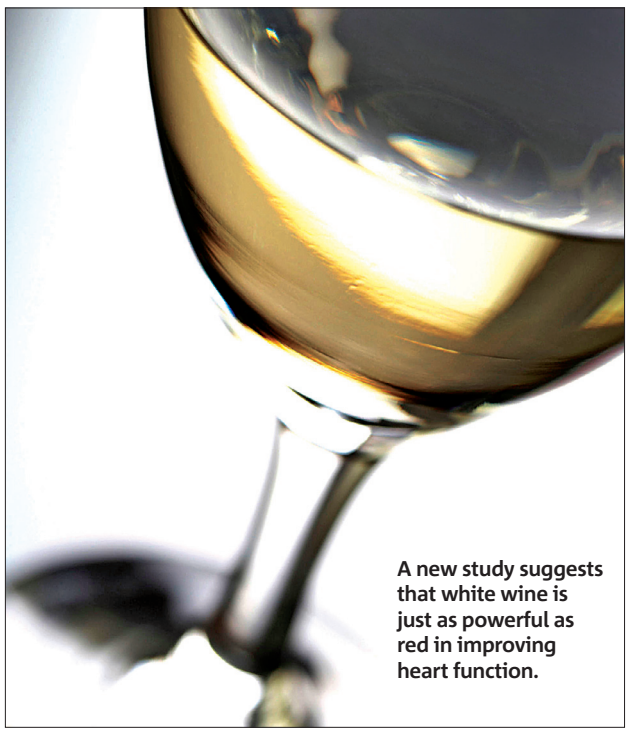
AXE sells many hair products for guys: shampoo, conditioner, paste, putty, pomade and cream, but not gel. Why? "Because a lot of guys use it — and the results are definitely not girl-approved!" says an AXE statement. The gelmet is dead!

ISTOCK PHOTO

When trying to impress women, men need to pay more attention to their coiff, reveals a new survey. Sixty-two per cent of women say a bad 'do can prevent them from going home with him.

Good news for white wine

LISA HANNAM
for Metro Canada



A new study suggests that white wine is just as powerful as red in improving heart function.

RESEARCH When picking a wine to drink for health, opt for a glass of red over white, right? Wrong. New research shows white wine also has cardioprotective benefits.

A study published in September in the Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry compared the antioxidant effects of resveratrol (from red) and tyrosol and hydroxytyrosol (from white) on rats. The results suggest that white wine is just as powerful as red in improving heart function and preventing artery blockage. "We tested a variety of wines," says Dipak K. Das, a professor at the University of Connecticut school of medicine, who led the study. "We found that white wines are rich in a type of antioxidant composition that is similarly present in olive oil."

But not all white wines pack the same antioxidant punch. Das has tested wines from all over the globe and recommends certain European white wines — those from Italy, France and Germany — as being rich in tyrosol and hydroxytyrosol. "In general, it can safely be said that some whites from Europe are as good as red wine from anywhere for heart health."

One thing hasn't changed: Stick to a glass a day.

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Your Liver, Your Friend...

Your liver is a veritable warehouse...
The liver plays a part in transforming a large number of substances, including vitamin B12, iron, copper and glucose. It then stores these substances so that they can be released as needed.

The liver and the gall bladder... Are they the same or not?
In actual fact, the liver produces the bile which, as you will recall, helps with digestion and with the destruction of toxic substances. This bile is then directed to the gall bladder and duodenum. When people say that they have had a liver operation, what they have most often undergone is a cholecystectomy, i.e., removal of the gall bladder.

Liver diseases:
Cirrhosis is certainly the best known liver disease. It is associated with alcohol consumption but, in reality, we should say with wine because, as far as I know, hard liquor sales have declined drastically in favour of wine. Other liver diseases are hepatitis A, B and C, cancer, gallstones, etc.

The liver and obesity:
When a person is overweight, there is an inescapable increase in the number of fat cells that slowly but surely accumulate in the liver. As a result, the liver becomes vulnerable to many kinds of attacks.

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Symptoms related to liver diseases:
These symptoms include fatigue, loss of appetite, muscle and joint pains and erectile difficulties in men. If the situation worsens, other symptoms may also appear, such as jaundice, increased bruising, blood in the stool, etc.

To be continued on February 5th...

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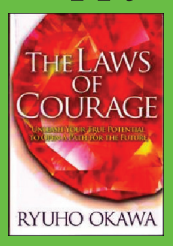

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Hyperactivity hinders quitting

CELIA MILNE
for Metro Canada

People who have hyperactivity and impulsivity were less likely to successfully quit smoking in a recent New York study.

STUDY Smokers with ADHD may find it harder to quit smoking. Researchers at Columbia University Medical Center in New York found in a study that people who have hyperactivity and impulsivity — two of the traits associated with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) — were less likely to successfully quit smoking than those without these traits.

The study involved 583 adult smokers, of whom 43 had ADHD. During the eight weeks of the study, participants were treated with Zyban (a drug that aids in smoking cessation), as well as the nicotine patch and cessation counselling.

After eight weeks, those with elevated hyperactivity and impulsivity showed lower quit rates. Inattention, another trait involved in ADHD, was not a factor in success rates.

Health in brief

BREAST CANCER Canadian researchers announced plans to start a clinical trial on new technology for detecting breast cancer that doctors hope will help find cancerous tumours sooner.

The Hamilton-based pilot project will evaluate the use of molecular imaging probes and imaging machinery that produce clearer images and have the potential to detect small tumours earlier than a mammogram test.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

EXERCISE A review of studies on beefed-up physical activity programs in schools found the interventions have some health benefits but little effect on the amount of exercise the kids do outside school.

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Lohan gets fussy over flight

Lindsay Lohan knows that you don't get anything if you don't ask for it. The troubled starlet was apparently denied a first-class seat on an overbooked flight out of Tampa, Fla., over the weekend, so she threw a tantrum, according to Fox News. **METRO NEWS SERVICES**

Entertainment

Joint bash

Ellen DeGeneres , left, and Portia de Rossi celebrated their birthdays with a joint bash Saturday, reports say. DeGeneres turned 51 on Jan. 26 and de Rossi 36 on Jan. 31. **PEOPLE.COM**

EDITOR: DEAN LISK, DEAN.LISK@METRONEWS.CA

Fanning finds her voice

STEVE GOW
for Metro Canada

When you meet Dakota Fanning, the first thing that hits you is simply how girly-but-poised the 14-year-old actress is.

One could be mistaken for thinking that's a result of growing up alongside pros like Denzel Washington and Tom Cruise, but the truth is young Fanning had that demeanour right from the start.

Still, with seven years of movie making now behind her, there is one aspect of celebrity that has eluded Fanning — the inane personal fascination with fame.

"From the very first interview I ever did, I've been asked, 'Do I have any friends?'" said Fanning during a recent interview. "When I was younger, I was like, 'What does that mean? Of course I have friends'.

"I've always been confused by that question because I really want to ask, 'Do you really think that I don't have any friends?'"

For the record, she does. And while Fanning has been busy with two new movies that hit theatres this Friday — the thriller Push and the stunning animated hit Coraline — Fanning still makes time for pals at private school and cheerleading camp. It may be a double-life but one that's hard-pressed to split her personality.

"She was nine years old (when we first met about Coraline)," said the film's director, Henry Selick. "She was like pulling her hair and being a little girl but telling me in this incredibly intelligent way why she should be Coraline and what she loves about the book and I was just super impressed."

Following the stop-motion animated style of his hit The Nightmare Before Christmas, Selick brings to life the thrilling story of a bored, young tomboy who finds a mystical secret door to a dark, alternate version of her life where everyone has buttons for eyes.

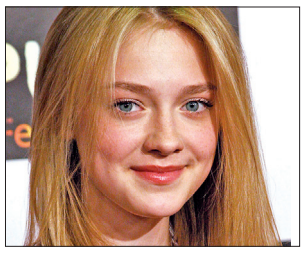
Fanning was such a fan of the popular Neil Gaiman novel, she dedicated five years to voicing the lead character.

"I just loved (the character's) curiosity and admired her bravery and she's so adventurous; I think you kind of have to be (adventurous) to do what I do, the places I go and the things I try out," said Fanning. "I don't know if I'm adventurous in the way she is (but) I'm definitely more girly."

On the web

- For more Dakota Fanning news, read the Famous People Are Weird blog at metronews.ca.

Dakota Fanning lends her voice to the lead character, right, in the animated film Coraline.



Dakota Fanning

In brief

AWARDS British Oscar frontrunners Danny Boyle and Kate Winslet lost out Sunday at the annual Evening Standard British Film Awards, as several trophies went to low budget and independent films. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

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ELISHA CUTHBERT

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WINNERS L'ORÉAL PARIS GlobalTV.com

Biel throws party for Timberlake

Jessica Biel threw her boyfriend Justin Timberlake a surprise birthday party Sunday. Timberlake — who turned 28 on Saturday — was stunned when he arrived at a Los Angeles hotel's penthouse suite to find friends and family there to celebrate. FEMALEFIRST.CO.UK

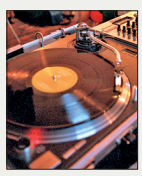
Red Bull seeks best party rocker

MUSIC DJs from all over the country are vying for supremacy in Red Bull 3Style.

The competition, associated with Canadian Music Week and Red Bull. will feature 80 of the country's best DJs spinning 15-minute sets at clubs in ten cities across Canada.

the spin

- For more details visit redbull.ca/3style



One contestant will come from each tour stop — among them Calgary, Winnipeg, Montreal and Quebec City — to compete in the national final at C1RCA in Toronto on March 12 as part of Canadian Music Week festivities. The Mod Club Theatre hosts the local stop of the competition on Feb. 12

Judging will be based on originality, transitions, technical skill, stage presence and crowd response.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

New drama for The Fray

Alt-rockers out to prove there's more to their music than TV soundtracks

BRIAN TOWIE
Metro Canada

The Fray is trying to prove that there's a band beyond TV appearances.

The four alternative rockers from Denver expect to hit the same heights with a new self-titled release that they did with their 2005 debut How To Save A Life. Consider it a more amplified version of what had The Fray topping the charts the first time around: Producers Aaron Johnson and Mike Flynn have returned to produce a work where catchy pop hooks and frontman Isaac Slade's personal lyrics will attempt to win over audiences in dramatic fashion. "We're not fetal anymore. Our balls have dropped," quips drummer Ben Wysocki.

Slade adds, "It's a funny thing to associate 'extreme' with The Fray. But in our range, we've pushed to the limit the kind of stuff that we've done in the past."

SONY MUSIC PHOTO

The Fray's self-titled new album is available in stores and online starting today.

It's a tricky situation for The Fray. The band is undeniably successful in its own right. Over My Head (Cable Car), their first single about Slade's falling out with brother and ex-member Caleb (Isaac notes he's reconciled with Caleb after he departed from the band.), hit various worldwide top 40 charts.

But the global acclaim, award nominations (including a Grammy) and commercial success also owes much to major television and film exposure. Second single How To Save A Life entered the charts in April 2006. That August, ABC used the song to promote Grey's Anatomy following its appearance on a March episode of the medical drama (with subsequent appearances on Scrubs and One Tree Hill). The exposure brought global domination. Digital sales of both singles numbered the millions, top chart spots became ubiquitous and the album consequently went double platinum. Fans of Grey's became fans of The Fray's.

"I don't think any band needs TV, but it has been very integral to The Fray's success in the past couple of years," Wysocki says of fame-via-television. "The medium acts as a conduit to exposing yourself to young audiences, especially now, when you can buy TV episodes online and carry them around in your pocket. It's much more permanent and reoccurring and we came along when that was happening."

Therein lies The Fray's dilemma: How do you continue your success without falling prey to notoriety chiefly as a television soundtrack band? They're willing to take the gamble, with first single You Found Me backing current promos of Lost.

"We've kind of looked at it as the icing on the cake," Wysocki says. "But there is that danger of having the audience associate you and what you do to the show when you have your own thing going on."

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And the nominees are...
Nominations for the 2009 Juno Awards will be announced live on CTV today beginning at 10:30 a.m. EST. Juno host and Gemini Award-winner Russell Peters will oversee the announcements. METRO NEWS SERVICES

The new money-makers

IntelleVision

Rick McGinnis

rick.mcginnis@metronews.ca

HARD TIMES: When it became apparent, sometime last fall, that we were headed for an extended spell of economic harrowing, the conventional wisdom was that, whatever happened to banks, auto manufacturers, airlines and luxury goods retailers, the entertainment industry would weather the storm.

The basic logic was minted during the Depression, when radio was king and movie theatres were filled every day with people looking to escape the grim world outside with bubbly musicals and screwball comedies set in high society at the top of double bills filled out with cartoons, newsreels and short subjects.

If anyone noticed that the world had changed a bit since the Roosevelt presidency, they didn't bother saying anything. (And frankly, given the straining comparisons being made between the nascent Obama presidency and FDR, this cognitive fog is starting to look more willful than naïve.)

Consumers are apparently hunkering down with entertainment options that either cut out costs built into manufacturing and shipping, or offer deep discounts, trends that are expected to continue. "It is possible that the recession could be accelerating the shift to digital," an analyst from Barclay's Capital told the Reporter.

The "recession-proof" entertainment industry was debunked a bit by a Hollywood Reporter story this weekend that complicated the picture a bit.

Some entertainment businesses are doing well — Netflix, for instance, with its move into video on demand subscriptions, and Amazon, thanks to a good holiday season. GameStop, a videogame retailer, has been doing booming business in used games, while Imax has predicted a profit that has done wonders for its stock, thanks to a switch from film to digital, the Imax version of summer blockbuster The Dark Knight, and a revamped business model that shares costs with its joint venture partners.

On top of it all, it finally looks like TiVo — the proper noun, not the verb — is about to turn a profit.

Consumers are apparently hunkering down with entertainment options that either cut out costs built into manufacturing and shipping, or offer deep discounts, trends that are expected to continue.

"It is possible that the recession could be accelerating the shift to digital," an analyst from Barclay's Capital told the Reporter.

It's the people actually making the product — movie studios and record companies and media conglomerates heavily invested in expensive ventures like TV networks with their large capital footprints — who are suffering, it seems, an irony impossible back in the '30s, when the same people owned the content producers and the distribution systems.

The biggest change is that audiences are now averse to being in one place at one time to enjoy one thing, and the people making money are the ones letting them do that for the lowest price.

Rick McGinnis writes about music, movies, books and television, but not opera.

In brief

ODDITY A man was arrested after an alleged assault on members of the Russian National Ballet Theatre at a downtown Minneapolis hotel. The man allegedly threw punches and slapped people, injuring two men and a ballerina from the troupe, in town to perform Sleeping Beauty at Northrop Auditorium. The 28-year-old man also allegedly hit a security guard.

ART PURCHASE Two national galleries said yesterday they raised 50 million pounds after a public appeal to keep Titian's 16th century masterpiece Diana and Actaeon on display in Britain. The National Gallery of Scotland and the National Gallery, London, bought the painting for a third of the 150 million pounds the Renaissance masterpiece was estimated to be worth on the open market.

THE ASSOICATED PRESS

GlobalStyle

Kenya Hunt

Exclusively at metronews.ca/globalstyle

See complete online movie listings, trailers, reviews and purchase tickets at metronews.ca/movies

TO		Vu	SC	C	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00
primetime	2/3/09	265	353	2	TVO	Undersea Exp.	Parks	The Agenda With Steve Paikin		The Street (N)		Stephen Fry in America (N)		Agenda-Paikin
		211	331	3	GTV	ET Canada	Entertainment	NCIS "Agent Afloat"		90210 (HDTV) (N)		Project Runway Canada		News (N)
		215	343	4	OMN1	Two/Half Men	The Simpsons	News (N)		Vivere Il	News (N)	The Simpsons	King of the Hill	Metropia
		210	302	6	CBC	Coronation St.	Jeopardy! (N)	Rick Mercer	22 Minutes	Wild Roses (HDTV) (N)		CBC News: The National		The Hour
		214	344	7	CITY	Law & Order: SVU		Privileged (HDTV) (N)		Scrubs	Scrubs	Primetime: What Would		News (N)
		212	313	8	CTV	etalk	Hollywood	American Idol (HDTV) (N)		(9:01) Fringe (N)		Law & Order: SVU		News (N)
		218	345	11	E!	The Insider (N)	E! News	The Biggest Loser (N)				Ruby	Kimora: Fab	News (N)
		137	763	13	TFO	Panorama		Évolution		Cinéma "La Chinoise"				Dans le secret
		-	-	14	-	Raymond	Raymond	News (N)		News (N)		Two/Half Men	King	Cold Case
		213	326	15	SUN	Scrubs	George Lopez	*Double Vision* ★★ (1992, Mystery) Kim Cattrall.				To Serve and Protect		Becker
		-	387	16	CBS	Inside Edition	Hollywood	NCIS "Agent Afloat"		The Mentalist (HDTV)		(10:01) Without a Trace (N)		News (N)
		-	385	17	NBC	The Insider (N)	Entertainment	The Biggest Loser (N)				Law & Order: SVU		News (N)
		-	386	18	ABC	Wheel-Fortune	Jeopardy! (N)	Homeland Security USA		Scrubs	Scrubs	Primetime: What Would		News
		219	346	20	ACH-B	Instant Star	TMZ (N)	Cold Case		Law & Order		(10:01) Without a Trace (N)		News (N)
		-	-	28	FOX	Judge Judy (N)	Two/Half Men	American Idol (HDTV) (N)		(9:01) Fringe (N)		Seinfeld	Two/Half Men	The Simpsons
		-	388	61	PBS	News-Lehrer	Keeping Up	Nova (HDTV) (N) (DVS)		Frontline (N) (DVS)		An Evening With Eartha Kitt		Business Rpt.
		297	652	330	WPX	Two/Half Men	Family Guy	90210 (HDTV) (N)		Privileged (HDTV) (N)		PIX News at Ten Tong.		Two/Half Men
		296	654	331	SBK	Wheel-Fortune	Jeopardy! (N)	Dr. Phil (HDTV)		WBZ News (N)	'70s Show	Frasier	Frasier	Punk'd
		298	653	332	TLA	Jamie Foxx	Wayans Bros.	My Wife-Kids	According-Jim	Friends	KTLA News	Two/Half Men	Two/Half Men	90210 (N)
news		502	390	26	NW	CBC News	Newman	The Hour		CBC News: The National		Mad Cow, Sacred Cow		National
		500	500	33	CNN	Lou Dobbs Tonight		Campbell Brown: No Bias		Larry King Live		Anderson Cooper 360 (HDTV)		
		509	504	79	CNB	Kudlow Report		CNBC Reports (HDTV)		Marijuana Inc.: Pot Industry		On the Money		Mad Money
sports		405	417	22	net	Hockeycentral	NHL Hockey Florida Panthers at Toronto Maple Leafs. (HDTV) (Live)					Sportsnet Connected		Hockey Central
		400	400	30	TSN	NBA Basketball Toronto Raptors at Cleveland Cavaliers. (HDTV) (Live)					SportsCentre		That's Hockey!	SportsCentre
family		411	457	58	OLN	Bounty Hunter	Bounty Hunter	Survivorman		Mantracker		Bounty Hunter	Bounty Hunter	Survivorman
		417	406	81	SC	NASCAR Pre.	Pass Time (N)	Low Life	Low Life	Super Bikes!	Super Bikes!	Hot Import	Hot Import	NASCAR Pre.
		551	542	25	YTV	Adrenaline Proj	Prank Patrol	Malcolm-Mid.	Futurama	Prank Patrol	Prank Patrol	Falcon Beach (DVS)		Mystery Hnt.
		554	544	45	TEL	Totally Spies	Total Drama	6TEEN	6TEEN	Futurama	American Dad	Robot Chicken	American Dad	Moral Orel
		556	540	51	FAM	Wizards-Place	Han. Montana	Zack & Cody	Latest Buzz	Wizards-Place	Life Derek	Ned's School	Cory in House	Zack & Cody
cable variety		602	567	27	W	Will & Grace	Friends	Extreme Celebrity Rehab (N)		Style by Jury	Style by Jury	How to Look Good Naked		Maxed Out
		570	580	29	MM	Degrassi: TNG	Instant Star	Gone Wild	Gone Wild	disBand	Technical Diff.	Degrassi: TNG	Instant Star	The Shift
		615	520	31	A&E	CSI: Miami (HDTV)		The First 48 (HDTV)		The First 48 (HDTV)		Manhunters	Manhunters	The Beast
		700	800	35	TLN	Centrovetrine	Sky TG 24	Serie A	Magnifica Italia	Nati Ieri		Raymond	Raymond	George Lopez
		571	581	36	MMM	mmmtop	Where You At	Popaganda		Gene Simmons Family Jewels			Celebrity Wrestling	
		575	583	38	CMT	Cross Canada Countdown		Home Improve.	Home Improve.	Reba	Reba	Hope & Faith	Hope & Faith	Three Wishes
		616	521	39	SHO	The Outer Limits		Mutant X		Testees	Trailer Park	The L Word Counseling.		House
		620	523	40	BVO	Joe Armando Generation		At the Concert Hall		Straight Shooter: The Mamas & the Papas			Bravonews	Law & Order
		601	562	41	SLC	Til Debt-Part	Rich Poor	Date My Ex: Jo & Slade		Rich Bride, Poor Bride		End of Leash	End of Leash	ET Canada
		522	506	43	HIS	NCIS "Grace Period"		Ultimate Engineering		Ax Men		NCIS "Grace Period"		Re-Inventors
		625	548	44	COM	Air Farce	Just for Laughs		Corner Gas	The Simpsons	South Park	S. Silverman	Flt.-Conchords	Daily Show
		600	564	46	H&G	House Hunters	Property Virgin	Pure Design	Style	Sarah's House	Design Inc.	Colin & Justin's Home Heist		Holmes-Homes
		294	529	47	TBS	House-Payne	House-Payne	*Next of Kin* ★★ (1989, Crime Drama) Patrick Swayze.				Steve Harvey	Seinfeld	Family Guy
		576	582	49	BET	106 & Park: BET's Top 10 Live		*You Got Served* ★★ (2004, Drama) Marques Houston.				Baldwin Hills	Baldwin Hills	Judge Hatchett
		627	528	50	SPC	Stargate Atlantis (DVS)		Lost		Star Trek: Voyager		Destination Truth (N)		Stargate SG-1
		581	566	52	MTV	Mom & Dad	After	MTV News	Cribs	A Double Shot at Love Special		A Double Shot at Love		Double Shot
		618	524	54	TROP	Planet Soap	Big Screen	Family Guy	Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Raymond	Family Guy	Married... With	Seinfeld
		603	561	56	FOOD	Chef at Home	Chef at Home	Restaurant Makeover		The F Word		Good Eats	Good Eats	Iron Chef Am.
		261	394	60	V	Murder, She Wrote		Bless-Father	On the Buses	Quantum Leap		I Prophesy	Supernatural	Poltergeist
		621	527	63	STR	The Ellen DeGeneres Show (N)		TMZ (N)	etalk	Look-A-Like	Off the Leash	The Tonight Show-Jay Leno		TMZ
		553	546	65	TRE	Ni Hao, Kai-lan	Nght Grdn	Toot & Puddle	Franklin	Little Bear	Maggie-Beast	Comfy Couch	Rolie Polie Olie	Max & Ruby
		115	711	101	TVA	Les Gags	Histoires-filles	La Fièvre de la danse (SC)		La Promesse (HDTV) (SC)		TVA 22 heures	(10:45) Denis Lévesque	
		126	730	102	RDI	24 Heures en 60 minutes		Grands reportages (SC)		Le Téléjournal (SC)		RDI en direct	Le National	Le Téléjournal
		526	507	249	VIVA	Judging Amy		Missing		Missing		Encounters	In Dreams	Psychic Inv.
		300	601	301	M1	(5:45) *Next*	(7:25) *All Hat* (2007, Drama)			*The Brave One* ★★ (2007, Suspense) Jodie Foster.				*The Quiet*
		305	612	306	PIX	*The Final Cut*	*Murray Maguire, M.E.* (2001, Mystery)			*Friday the 13th* ★★ (1980, Horror)			(10:45) *Dance Me Outside*	

critics' corner

The L Word
Should old acquaintances be forgot? Depends on whom you ask — and who they are. In this new episode, Bette and Tina's future is threatened by the return of someone they used to know, while Helena's life is turned upside down when a former flame turns up. Tasha and Alice seek professional help in "Least Likely." 10 PM on SHO

NCIS
When a lieutenant on Tony's ship jumps overboard, Ziva and McGee have the sad task of telling his wife. But when they arrive at her home, they find her dead. And it turns out the lieutenant didn't kill himself by jumping overboard after all in "Agent Afloat." 8 PM on GTV, CBS

Without a Trace
The Missing Persons Squad is surprised to learn the answer in this new episode. As Jack and his team dig into the disappearance of two women from a suburban neighborhood, they're shocked to discover who the purported perpetrator is in "Friends and Neighbors." 10:01 PM on ACH-B CBS

Emma's cover-up

Though her Harry Potter costar Daniel Radcliffe has bared all for work, Emma Watson is content to remain clean-cut. "I have no plans to do anything for the sake of it, or to shock people," she told the Mail on Sunday's Live magazine. PEOPLE.COM

Celebrity Buzz

Simon says he's not gay — just busy

RUMOURS Simon Cowell is not gay, according to femalefirst.co.uk. The music mogul, who recently split from long-term girlfriend Terri Seymour, has laughed off rumours about his sexuality, saying he's single because he keeps "crazy hours." "I am not gay. But in this business, if you were it wouldn't matter. It is not exactly unusual to be gay in the music business or the TV business," he says. "It is 2009, after all. So if you are, you are and if you are not, you are not." Cowell says he's "unlikely" to settle down. He said: "I don't think marriage would suit me or the person I would marry. I am happy single." METRO NEWS SERVICES

Amy's parents get a say in her fortune

MONEY Amy Winehouse has turned over partial control of her $21 million US fortune to her parents. The troubled singer, who is still hiding out in St. Lucia, is looking to curb her wild spending as much as her wild ways, according to the Sunday Mirror. "Everyone is pleased because it means Amy is listening to good advice," a source tells the newspaper. METRO NEWS SERVICES

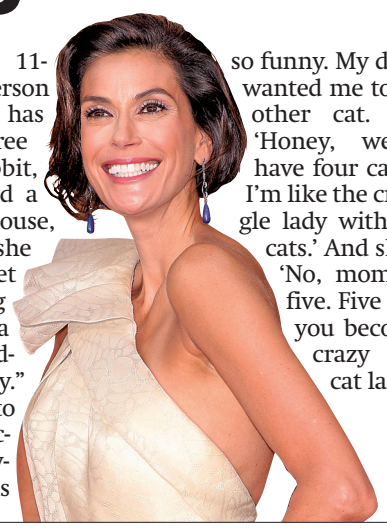
Teri didn't want to be a 'crazy single cat lady'

PETS Actress Teri Hatcher sleeps in the same bed as her dog, femalefirst.co.uk reports. The Desperate Housewives star recently gave an unwanted dog a new home, but admits his habits are hampering her sleep a little.

Hatcher explained: "I got a new dog. I got an American Bulldog named Jack I rescued. He's not a big shedder, but he does snore. I have to wear earplugs when he sleeps with me."

The actress, 44, whose daughter is 11-year-old Emerson Rose, already has two dogs, three cats, a rabbit, two birds and a horse at her house, and revealed she decided to get a new dog rather than a cat so she didn't look "crazy."

She added to TV show Access Hollywood: "It was so funny. My daughter wanted me to get another cat. I said, 'Honey, we can't have four cats, then I'm like the crazy single lady with all the cats.' And she goes, 'No, mom, that's five. Five is when you become the crazy single cat lady.'" METRO NEWS SERVICES



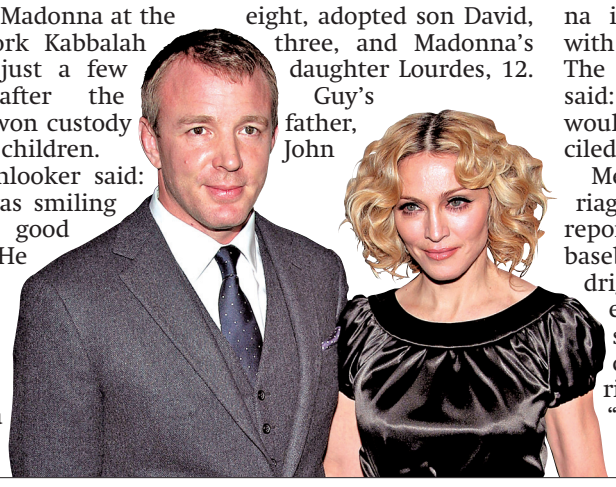
Madonna and Guy meet up in NYC

FAMILY MATTERS Madonna and Guy Ritchie have spent the weekend together in New York, femalefirst.co.uk reports. Ritchie met his ex-wife Madonna at the New York Kabbalah centre just a few days after the singer won custody of their children.

An onlooker said: "Guy was smiling and in good spirits. He still spends time with Madonna as a family."

This was reportedly the second weekend in a row the estranged couple have met at the Kabbalah centre with their children: Rocco, eight, adopted son David, three, and Madonna's daughter Lourdes, 12. Guy's father, John Ritchie, has recently said the couple is maintaining an amicable relationship because of their children, but he is delighted Madonna is distracting herself with "lots of boyfriends." The protective father, 79, said: "The worst thing would be if they reconciled."

Meanwhile, the marriage of one Madonna's reported love interests, baseball star Alex Rodriguez, has officially ended.Documents issued at a US county court stated his marriage to Cynthia was "irretrievably broken." METRO NEWS SERVICES



Tori's all baby talk

PARENTING Tori Spelling may have had everyone abuzz about her post-baby figure at the Byron Tracey Salon opening on Jan. 29, but the mother of two was all baby talk, intouchweekly.com reports.

"Today she said 'Mama' for the first time," Spelling told In Touch, referring to eight-month-old daughter Stella. "We were in the living room and I heard, 'Mama,' and I was like, 'Oh my God!' My heart melted."

The 35-year-old actress is also back to work on the set of 90210. "It's been really fun," Spelling said. "I was really nervous the first day, but halfway through I was like, 'Wow, this feels... comfortable.'" But she admits there's been one hiccup. "I was the youngest in the cast and now I'm one of the oldest," she explained. "Jennie (Garth) told me not to say 'older.' We're supposed to say, 'One of the originals.'" METRO NEWS SERVICES

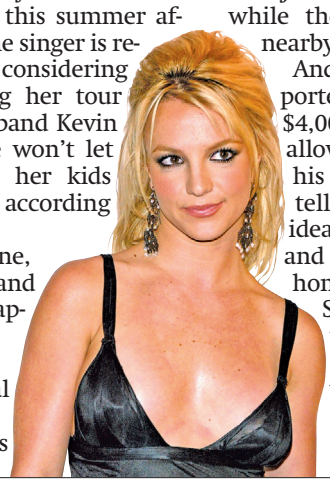
GETTY IMAGES

Britney may cancel tour

CUSTODY Looks like Britney Spears may not be out on the road this summer after all. The singer is reportedly considering cancelling her tour if ex-husband Kevin Federline won't let her take her kids with her, according to TMZ.

Federline, Spears and her dad apparently worked out a deal whereby her boys would stay in Los Angeles, New Jersey or New Orleans while their mom toured nearby.

And Federline was reportedly promised $4,000 US a week for allowing it, but now his lawyers are telling him it's a bad idea. If he backs out and keeps the kids at home, it's likely Spears won't want to go on the road at all, according to the source. METRO NEWS SERVICES



A stress-free way to grocery shop

Let's face it. For most of us, grocery shopping under the best conditions is a time-consuming challenge. But there's a simpler, smarter way to grocery shop that lets you get back some of your precious time. After all, you have better things to do with your time.

With grocerygateway.com you can shop online at your convenience, without sacrificing quality.

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grocerygateway.com

Men's nipples puzzle Scarlett

BIOLOGY Scarlett Johansson is fascinated by men's nipples, femalefirst.co.uk reports. The He's Just Not That Into You actress can't understand why boys still have them, adding the concept of male nipples completely baffles her.

She is quoted by the Chicago Sun Times newspaper as saying: "The one thing I don't understand about men is nipples. I don't know if there is one aspect of men that I don't understand other than why they have nipples. Honestly, why? I guess it has something to do with the X chromosome. What is the function of the male nipple? Maybe we all start as androgynous creatures and then they become men?" METRO NEWS SERVICES

The Weather Network
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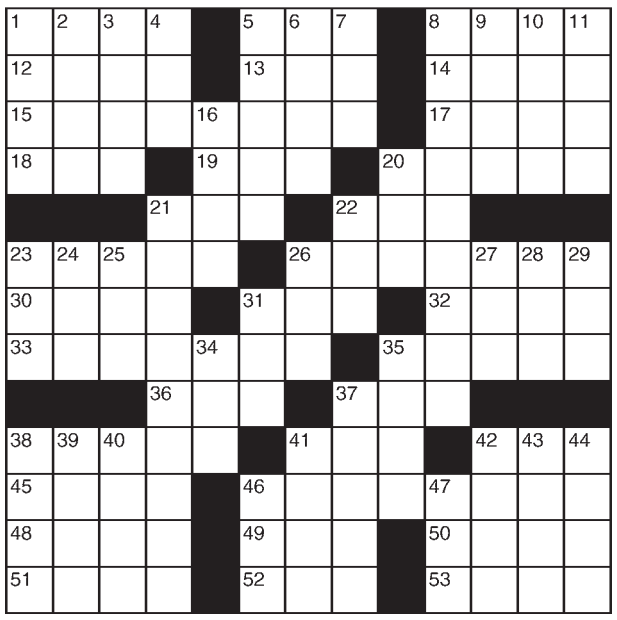
Today Flurries 80% -4° / -17°
Wednesday Variable -14° / -19°
Thursday Flurries 60% -11° / -12°

WeatherEye... Free App Available on iPhone.

For more delicious Metro recipes, visit: **metronews.ca/food**

Take Five



Crossword across

1 Therefore
5 Hot tub
8 Datum
12 Honeycomb compartment
13 Coop dweller
14 Wind instrument
15 Common wintertime ailment
17 — -podrida
18 Peculiar
19 Lummox
20 Glisten
21 — for tat
22 Schoolkids' transport
23 Muscle
26 No purebred
30 German car
31 Talk and talk and talk
32 Mine, partially
33 Filled the shelves
35 Run, as colors
36 Slippery fish
37 Evil
38 Partonesque
41 Supporting
42 Mainlander's souvenir
45 Grooving on
46 Became established
48 List-ending abbr.
49 So five minutes ago
50 Basilica area
51 — & Taylor
52 Distort
53 Earl Grey's family?

Crossword down

1 Repeat performance?
2 14-Across insert
3 Satisfied
4 Antiquated
5 Young hog
6 Riches
7 Moreover
8 Iron pyrite
9 Competent
10 Pop flavour
11 Squad
16 Neologize
20 Holster contents
21 Trite
22 Short cut?
23 — -relief
24 Same old same-old
25 Bustle
26 Frenzied
27 Wish otherwise
28 Prior to
29 '60s psychedelic
31 Toothpaste, often
34 Crucial
35 Fir coat
37 Swag
38 Actress Jessica
39 "Do — others ..."
40 Celeb
41 Bridge table quorum
42 Easy bounding gait
43 "Born Free" lioness
44 Mid-month date
46 AAA job
47 Chapeau

Sudoku

HOW TO PLAY: Digits 1 through 9 will appear once in each zone – one zone is an outlined 3x3 grid within the larger puzzle grid. There are nine zones in the puzzle. Do not enter a digit into a box if it already appears elsewhere in the same zone, row across or column down the entire puzzle.

		6				1		
		5	8		9	7		
7				1				6
	5	3	9		1	8	4	
	9	7	6		4	2	1	
5				3				9
		1	2		6	5		
		2				3		

PREVIOUS DAY'S CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU ANSWERS:

S	A	C			A	R	T		R	I	F	F
A	G	O	G		P	E	A		I	L	I	E
R	I	M	E		T	A	B		C	L	E	W
I	N	B	O	X		P	O	O	H			
			R	I	P		O	R	A	N	G	E
F	R	A	G	I	L	E		B	R	E	A	K
L	U	R	E		Y	A	K		D	A	Z	E
O	N	I	C	E		T	E	M	P	T	E	D
P	E	D	A	L	S		W	A	R			
			R	I	P	E		P	Y	G	M	Y
P	A	U	L		I	C	H		O	R	E	O
H	I	F	I		R	H	O		R	I	N	K
I	R	O	N		E	O	N			D	U	E

5	6	8	2	9	1	3	7	4
2	1	3	5	4	7	6	9	8
7	4	9	3	6	8	5	2	1
8	2	4	7	5	6	9	1	3
1	9	5	4	2	3	8	6	7
3	7	6	8	1	9	4	5	2
6	8	1	9	3	2	7	4	5
4	3	2	6	7	5	1	8	9
9	5	7	1	8	4	2	3	6

Find today's answers + play more games at metronews.ca

SUDOKU SOLVE TIME:

Under 13 min .....Genius
13-17 min.....Scholar
17-21 min .....Smart
21-25 min .....Not bad
25+ min.....Keep practising

Metro Recipe of the Day

Spiced Lamb with Couscous

INGREDIENTS:

2 tsp (10 ml) olive oil
250 g lean boneless lamb, cubed
2 tsp (10 ml) ground coriander
2 tsp (10 ml) ground cumin
1 tsp (5 ml) ground ginger
1 1/3 cup (200 ml) vegetable juice
1/2 cup (125 ml) vegetable stock
1 tbsp (15 ml) tomato paste
1 butternut squash, peeled, seeded and cut into cubes
3 zucchini, halved lengthwise and thickly sliced
1 cup (250 ml) couscous

METHOD

1. Heat oil in large saucepan or flameproof casserole dish. Add lamb and cook over moderate heat 5 minutes, or until lamb is richly browned. Sprinkle spices into pan and cook for 1 minute, stirring constantly.
2. Stir in vegetable juice, stock and tomato paste and boil. Reduce heat to simmer, cover and cook 30 minutes.
3. Stir in butternut squash and cook 5 minutes, then add zucchini. Cover and cook gently 25 minutes, or until lamb and vegetables are tender.
4. About 15 minutes before lamb is ready, prepare couscous. Cook following package instructions, then fluff with a fork.
5. Divide couscous among serving bowls and spoon lamb stew over top. Serve immediately.

SERVES 4

rd.ca

For nutritional information on this and other great recipes, go to **rd.ca** or check out **Key Ingredients in this month's Reader's Digest, on newsstands now!**

Horoscopes

AVATAR VENUS

ARIES
MARCH 21-APRIL 20
Your principled actions determine the outcome. A shameless schemer tells secrets. An unusual social situation causes you to feel anxious.

TAURUS
APRIL 21-MAY 21
Don't get involved in stranger's situation that will work itself out. A rescuer steps in with advice about several choices.

GEMINI
MAY 22-JUNE 21
Don't flame anybody just because they have bad taste. Frequent disruptions will be to your benefit.

CANCER
JUNE 22-JULY 22
Someone gets bent out of shape over a love life fiasco. Be considerate of those who can't fulfil their obligations.

LEO
JULY 23-AUG 23
Give direction when a friend gets lost in maze of emotions. Someone will drive you crazy in a very nice way.

VIRGO
AUG 24-SEPT 22
Don't try to convert someone to your way of thinking. There's not much time left to tend to unfinished business.

LIBRA
SEPT 23-OCT 23
One of your allies must now move on to a better life. The least said about a tense clash, the better.

SCORPIO
OCT 24-NOV 22
A character flaw in someone you know will be made visible. Be alert and aware of your surroundings at all times.

SAGITTARIUS
NOV 23-DEC 21
A nerve wracking nemesis forces you into making a new plan. Stubbornness causes criticism to arise.

CAPRICORN
DEC 22-JAN 20
Be bland when you're confronted by a stranger. Increase your bliss without spending money.

AQUARIUS
JAN 21-FEB 18
A friend's major move will alter your relationship. Desperate measures are taken when a love affair is discovered.

PISCES
FEB 19-MARCH 20
Allow love to break through to you. You'll refuse to be unnerved by a strange event.

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he's just *not* that into you

In Theatres February 6

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Go to metronews.ca and take Metro's Sex & Relationship columnist Josey Vogels' quiz to find out which *he's just not that into you* character you are most like and you could WIN!

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